

BEING

THE

True TOUCHSTONE

Which shows both

GRACE and NATURE

OR

A Discourse concerning Self-Examination, by which both Saints and Sinners may come to know themselves.

WHEREUNTO

Are added sundry MEDITATIONS relating to the LORDS SUPPER.

By Nathanael Vincent, M. A. Minister of the Gospel.

Psal. 26. 2. Examine me O Lord, prove me, try my Reins and my Heart.

'E cælo descendit viâs carnis.

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TO THE
RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
Sir THOMAS PLAYER,
Knight, and Chamberlain of the
City of L O N D O N.

Much Honoured Sir!

Greatness and Goodness,
though more rarely joyn-
ed, are not inconsistent.
God himself is *Optimus Maximus*, the
Highest and the Best of Beings.
Magistrates that are good, do best
deserve the Name of *Gods* on Earth.
*Psal. 82. 6. I said ye are Gods, but
ye shall dye like Men. And when*
A 2 Death

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Death seizes on them, their Greatness is buried with them, but their goodness accompanies them into another World, and in *this* World perpetuates their Names, and makes their Memory Blessed. Rich men ought not to be High minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches. Wealth is but as it were a *Castle in the Air*; and a *High Wall* in the conceit and fancy of him that has it. The Rich man therefore is to rejoyce that he is made low, because as the flower of the Grass he shall pass away, Jam. 1. 10.

Good Sir,

Weigh this World but in the right Scales, and it will be found a *Drop*, a *Small Dust*, as the Prophets phrase is.

Goodness is the most real Grandeur, Holiness the highest Honour,
Godli-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Godliness the greatest Gain; and Purity has the most solid and exquisite Delight and Pleasure for its concomitant.

In this degenerate Age, wherein Sin is so much in fashion; and become the Mode of the Times; it is matter of rejoycing, to see some Great men striving against the stream, and manifesting to all that they are not afraid or ashamed of being Religious. I wish more Great Men were good, and that all good men were a great deal better! Times would quickly alter with Manners, and if more would lead good Lives, more would see good days.

Go on I beseech you Sir! To stand up for God, and for your Country, God and your Country will

The Epistle Dedicatory.

will stand by you. It is your Glory that you are a firm Protestant against Popery, and against Atheism also and Prophaneness; and that both in Word and Conversation.

Go on to be Faithful, in that great Trust which most deservedly is reposed in you; and to be a *greater Treasure* to your beloved City, then that you are keeper of; Go on to a Father to Orphans, a Patron to Apprentices, a Friend to Masters, and one of the Darlings of *London*. May you live long to be *κοινὸν ἀγαθόν* a publick Good, and may your Name outlive you many Ages!

Stapleton the Jesuit put forth a Book Entitled *Tres Thomæ*, the Three Thomas's. St. Thomas the Apostle, Thomas of Becket, and Sir Thomas More. Every Christian will readi-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

readily grant the preeminence to an Apostle ; but for the other two, the Arch-Bishop and the Statesman ; The *Thomas* I addresse to, does much outvy them, and in saying this, I cannot justly be charged with Flattery.

The proud Prelate *Becket*, and the Unhappy Wit Sir *Thomas More*, were for the *Pope* against their *Kings*. But Sir *Thomas Player* is, and will be for the *King* against the *Pope* and all his *Adherents*.

Many Trials of the Papists have of late been Printed, in this Treatise is the *greatest Trial of all*, and that is the Trial of *our selves*. May your Conscience upon the perusal of it acquit you at present ; and pro-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

nounce you upright ; and may you
be absolved and crowned at the
great approaching day of Trial, this
is the Prayer of

Sir,

Your most Humble Servant,

Nathanael Vincent.

T O



TO THE

READER.

Reader !

TIS an Argument of sufficient Strength, to prove that Man has lost his understanding by his sin, that he is so unconcern'd about Himself, so fearlesse of Eternal Ruine, so negligent of Everlasting Salvation ; though prudent in secular and smaller matters, yet he is perfectly phrantick in the greatest and most weighty concerns of another World. If a man have a trial at Law is he thoughtful of the issue.
The

To the Reader.

The Malefactor who is to be tried for his Life, is solicitous about the Judges sentence. But though All must be tried and judged at the great Tribunal of the Lord of Heaven and Earth, yet few, very few regard it, or think before hand what is like to be their unalterable Doom.

How truly lamentable is it, that Souls should be thus drown'd in flesh and sensuality! So blinded by the Prince of Darkness, as not to consider what is likely to become of themselves: What must be their next Home, when once they leave their present Tabernacle which is continually decaying, and must fall down quickly, may fall down suddenly.

To prove thy self is certainly thy Wisdom. Ignorance of sins evil, makes sin damnable; ignorance of Satans wiles and devices makes them successful to destruction;

To the Reader.

struction; ignorance of a bad estate makes it so much the worse because 'tis not probable it should be changed; and not discerning the Grace that is in us keeps the Conscience, and Heart upon the Rack: Satan is gratified, and the Comfort of the Spirit is refused.

Reader!

Converse with thy self will be very advantageous. Why should Thou and thy self be perfect Strangers any longer? Commune often with thy own Heart, and reflect more upon thy Life, this would be an excellent means to make both better.

I did not think when first I began to Preach upon this subject, to have been so large upon it, much less had I thoughts to make the discourse publick; but the concurrent desire of a considerable number made me hope it had been already profitable

To the Reader.

ble unto many, and might be useful unto more.

Reader ! Whether thou art to be reckoned among the Righteous or the Wicked, be not unwilling to examine thy self : For if thou art serious in this matter, the effect will be either a profitable fear and sorrow ; or good Hope, and Peace, and Joy.

Nathanael Vincent.

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A

DISCOURSE

Concerning *Self-Examination*, by
which both Saints and Sinners
may come to know themselves.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Prove your own selves.*

Eauve's Sermon.



He sum of true Wisdom, as One
observes does consist in two
things, *Dei cognitione, & nostri*,
in the knowledge of God, and
of *our selves*: now to make us
wise in both these respects, is one great de-
sign of the holy Scriptures. He that is a
stranger unto God, must needs be a stranger
unto Rest and Satisfaction, and is ignorant
of Him who is the Highest and Chiefest good
of all. He that is a stranger to *Himself*, must
needs remain both sinful and miserable, and
yet both *sin* and *miser*y are unperceived; and
B ignorance

ignorance how *Bad* he is, fixes him in a state that is not good; and makes it the more unlikely, that ever it should be better'd. No wonder therefore that the Apostle does put all upon the Examination and *proving of themselves.*

Which Counſel is very proper both to *Sinners* and to *Saints*. First 'tis proper to *Sinners*: for if they come to understand aright their owri deplorable and wretched caſe; this would be one large ſtep from *ſin to Grace*. Secondly, 'tis proper alſo to *Saints*; for proving of themſelves will be the way to evidence the ſaving change that hath been wrought in them, and will be a large ſtep from *Grace to Comfort*.

In the words we have,

1. A duty and that is *to prove*; the Greek word is δοκιμαζειτε; which is uſed by Authors for the proving of Gold in the fire, τὸ χρυσὸν ἐν τῷ πυρὶ δοκιμαζομεν *Iſocrat*. Now Gold is proved in the fire in order to its diſcovery that 'tis true Gold, and that the dross may be ſeparated from it. So the proving in the Text muſt be in order unto a *diſcovery*; and in order unto *greater ſanctification and purity,*

2. *Whom*

2. *Whom* is it our duty to prove? *Our own selves.* In reference to others we are to *hope and believe all things,* as far as is consistent with the apparent fruits they bring forth, and the faithfulness which we owe them. But in reference to our selves: the greater severity, commonly the greater sincerity. We must watch and be jealous over our selves, lest we be mistaken and deceived in, and by our selves. And if you ask me. *What we are to prove our selves about?* The context informs us. *Whether we are in the Faith? Whether Christ be in us yea, or no?*

Doctrine

Doct. The *Doctrine* I raise from the words is this. *It highly concerns all to examine and prove themselves:* this duty is very much urged in the verse where the Text lies. *Examine your selves,* says the Apostle, *Prove your own selves,* the Counsel is doubled; which shews the great concernment of it, together with the difficulty and backwardness in us all to follow it: therefore he adds, as if he did half chide; *What! Know you not your own selves?* q. d. To be ignorant of your selves, your actions; and your state, for want of self-trial, is your *Sin and shame*; and argues prodigious carelessness to be in you, and you to be in unexpressible danger.

- In the handling of this Doctrine I shall
1. First tell you, *what is implied in this proving*
 2. *of our selves.* Secondly, *what of our selves is*
 3. *to be proved.* Thirdly, *concerning what we*
 4. *are to prove our selves.* Fourthly, *the Manner*
 5. *how we are to do it.* Fifthly, *by what Rule*
 6. *and Touchstone this proof of our selves is to be*
 7. *made.* Sixthly, *the special times and seasons*
 8. *when this duty is to be done.* Seventhly, *lay*
 9. *down the reasons persuading to the practice of*
 10. *it.* Eighthly, *resolve several Cases of Con-*
 11. *science relating to this subject.* Lastly, *close*
 12. *with the Application.*

Head. 1.

In the first place I am to tell you, *What is implied in this proving of our selves, and here several propositions are to be premised.*

1. 1. The Children of men *do owe obedience unto God as their rightful Lord and Governour; and consequently it concerns them to examine, whether the Lord has been obeyed, or other Lords have had, and still have the dominion over them.* Man did not make himself; neither is he able to preserve himself; and he is farthest off from being able to redeem and save himself: therefore man is not his own, 'tis impious in him to speak that language. Psal. 12. 4. *Who is Lord over me?* But that God who gave him his being, who holds

holds his soul in life, and alone can redeem and save his soul from wrath, does justly lay claim to him as his subject, and require obedience from him.

2. The Sons of men *are under a law*, which ^{2^d} they are obliged to keep as a rule of righteousness. God himself has given them a law, *which is holy just and good*, they are therefore to examine *what respect they have had to this law*. Whether it has been kept as it ought, like the *apple of the eye*? Or whether it has been hated and broken and cast behind the back? For sincere obedience and life, and death and disobedience are joyned together. *Dent. 30. 19, 20.*

3. We are all of us not only under a law, ^{3^d} but *under the eye of our Lord and Law-giver continually*. *He compasses our path and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways.* Psal. 139. 3. And shall we be ignorant of our own ways? *His eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men.* Psal. 11. 4. When we would look more intently, our eye-lids are more contracted. *Gods eye-lids* are mentioned, to signify how intently he eyes, when he tries the Children of men; and shall not they prove and try themselves?

A 4. Naturally we are prone to nothing but what is contrary to that Law and Rule we should walk by. The Apostle sticks not to say, that *the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.* Rom. 8. 7. And as the heart of man is *desperately wicked*, so 'tis deceitful above all things, and it manifests its deceitfulness in concealing and hiding, that it may hold fast its wickedness. Those that have *such hearts*, how jealous should they be of them? How careful to prove, and to pry into them? And suppose there be a new nature given, yet upon proof 'twill be found that there is too too much of the old remaining.

B 5. We are endued with a power of self-reflection; and may take notice both of our hearts & actions. There is a law written in our hearts by nature, which does in part discover what we should do, and be; but the Word of God much more fully informs us of our duty. We may erect a Bar or Tribunal in our own souls, and call our selves before it. Conscience can first be Witness, and afterwards a Judge. And truly a right judging of our selves is one way to escape, being condemned with the world.
1 Cor. 11. 31.

C 6. All must be Summoned to give an account

count of themselves unto God at last. Rom. 14. 12. So then every one of us must give account of himself unto God. 2 Cor. 5. 10. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or evil. Should we not then try and prove our selves before hand, repent of our evil deeds, believe in the Mediator, and thoroughly amend our doings, that we may be found of our Lord and Judge, in peace?

These propositions premised, I shall open the nature of this duty of self-proving.

1. Self-proving implies a *serious Inquisition, and Search into our selves. Psal. 77. 6. I communed with my own heart, and my spirit made diligent search.* And truly a diligent search is but needful; for as *Augustine* observes. *Grande profundum est homo.* Man is a great deep, and therefore 'tis difficult for a man to sound himself, and to come to the bottom of his own heart. *Job* speaks of the secrets of nature, and says, *there is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the Vultures eye, though it be so piercing hath not seen. Job. 28. 7.* But the secrets of the heart are more abstruse, and hard to be found out. The Heathen Poet advised *Tecum habita. Dwell with thy self;*

our thoughts should dwell much upon our selves, that we may find out the utmost of our selves. Our whole man is to fall under our inspection, our ways, our words, our senses, our souls, are all to be lookt over.

2. 2. Self-proving implies, *a fear of self-deceit*. The Apostle cautions against being deceived by man, *Eph. 5. 6. Let no man deceive you with vain words*; against being beguiled by Satan, *2 Cor. 11. 3. But I fear lest by any means as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*. He cautions also against self-deceit, *1 Cor. 3. 18. Let no man deceive himself*. He that is not jealous over himself will easily mistake, and may go out of the World mistaken, and after death the mistake will be impossible to be corrected; we must therefore take heed to our selves that our spirits deal not treacherously.

3. Self proving implies, *using the Light of the Word of God*. This Word is *quick and powerful*; and as the Anatomists Knife, dissects all the parts of the Body, and lays even the inmost of them open unto view: so the Word like a *sharp and two edged Sword*, does pierce through all, and divides *between Soul and*

and Spirit, i. e. between Nature and Grace, for the natural man is called *luxurians*; or the meaning may be, that the Word discovers not only the corruption in the Affections, and the inferior faculties of the Soul; but also that depravation and sin, which is in the faculties which are Superior, and *discerns what the intents and thoughts* and reasonings of the heart are, *Heb. 4. 12.* Unless we make use of the light of the Word we shall be lost in the dark, while searching our selves. The Word makes manifest the very secrets of the heart, and hereby 'tis plain that God who searches the heart is the Author of this Word, and does accompany it, *1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.* We find an Hearer convinced of all, and judged of all; *the secrets of his heart are made manifest, and worshipping God, he acknowledges God is in the Preachers of a Truth.*

4. Self-proving implies, comparing our selves with that Rule whereunto we ought to be conformed. The Commands of God lay an obligation upon the whole man. We are required to *cleanse our hands, and purifie our hearts*, *Jam. 4. 8.* We must be holy in all manner of Conversation, and our affections must be set on things above, not on Earthly things; our Minds also and Consciences must

must be purged from their defilements. Now a comparison is to be made between, what *we should be*, and what *we are*. This bringing our selves to the right Rule, will discover our obliquities, and cause us the better to understand our selves. The Apostle in another case condemns the folly of them; *Who measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves among themselves*. Let us remember *Vivendum est regulis*, we must walk by Rule and that is the Word, and by the Word we must at last be judged, therefore 'tis our wisdom to see whether heart, and life are agreeable to it.

5. Self-proving implies, *Self-accusing and self-condemning for what is evil*. Upon examination having found out our iniquities, we must hold up our guilty hands at Gods Bar, and acknowledge all we know: all that Satan can justly lay to our charge; Nay, all that is down in the Book of Gods own remembrance, *Psal. 51. 3. I acknowledge my iniquity and my sin is ever before me*. And as upon the discovery of sin we are to be our own Accusers, so also to judge and condemn our selves. We must readily justify the Lord in the greatest severities at present; nay, we must acquit him upon supposition of eternal severity, if he should make us to feel his wrath,

Prove your own selves.

11

wrath, and greatest indignation for ever.

6. Self-proving implies, approving and taking comfort in that grace and goodness that has been wrought in us by the Spirit. As we are to be strict in the search after sin, so grace is in no wise to be overlookt. The least degree of true grace, is great matter of praise, nay, will occasion eternal thanksgiving. God does not despise the day of small things, neither should we, but must own the good things, *though but some good things*, which are in us in Christ Jesus, *Philem. 6.* Breathing after God, prizing of Christ, weariness of sin, and longing to be holy: must in no wise be unobserved in this work of Self-examination.

7. Self-proving will never be to any purpose, unless there be a crying unto the Lord himself, to search us; that we may not pass a wrong judgment upon our selves. What depth is there that He cannot fathom? What can be concealed from him who knows all things? *Jer. 17. 10. I the Lord search the heart:* though 'tis deceitful above all things, it cannot deceive me, *I try the Reins.* David therefore prays, *Examine me O Lord, and prove me, try my Reins and my Heart, Psal. 26. 2. and Psal. 139. 23, 24. Search me O God*

God and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Hea 6. 2.
 2. In the second place I am to shew what of our selves is to be proved.

1. We are to examine and prove, what is our common and allowed practice. A Sanguine man is not denominated Pale as *Aristotle* observes, when he is Pale through fear; nor a Pale man Sanguine, when he blushes through shame. A good man may sometimes fall into that which is evil, and a bad man may sometimes hit upon an action that is good. The Tree is to be judged by the ordinary Fruit it bears. The Apostle speaks of his *manner of life* that it was *godly in Christ Jesus*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 10, 12. But if it be our manner to *be workers of iniquity*, our doom will be at last to be *excluded the Kingdom*, Luk. 13. 26, 27.

2. We are to examine what course we are resolved still to take; If the wicked man will *forsake his way and turn to God*, mercy is *promised and abundant pardon*, Esa. 55. 7. If the prodigal come home to his Fathers House, he shall be received with joy, his former riot being forgotten and forgiven; so that

that the door of hope is open even to the ungodly man, if he will but deny his ungodliness. But if the enemies of God will not lay down their Weapons, but refuse and rebel still, this argues the state to be bad and destruction to be near: the Lord may quickly come to a resolution *to ease himself of such Adversaries*, Esa. 1. 24.

3. We must examine what company is most acceptable to us. If ~~we~~ we love the ungodly who hate the Lord: if the wickedness of others whereby God is dishonoured, is not the matter of our dislike, as long as they thwart not, but promote our secular and carnal interest; if we like the company of Fools, (and Sinners are the worst Fools) well enough, 'tis a sign we are Fools ourselves; *Fools indeed* who venture to be destroyed, and to go to Hell for company, *Prov.* 13. 20. But if the *Saints* are lookt upon as the most excellent ones, and delighted in as the best Society, *Psal.* 16. 3. if we love them that are born of God, it shews that we ourselves are born of him.

4. We must examine of what nature our Communication is. The Tongue is the index of the heart and shews what is in it. As evil Communications corrupt good manners, so they are

are a sign of a corrupt heart from whence they proceed. A Tongue that is not bridled; but rails, lies, backbites, and is obscene, impious and prophane, is an argument that *Religion is but vain*, Jam. 1. 26. But when the Tongue, not out of any carnal design, but delightfully talks of the Word of God; *when we sit in the house, when we walk by the way, when we lie down and when we rise up* 'tis a sign the *Word is in the Heart*, and that the Heart is renewed and changed by the Word, Deut. 4. 6, 7.

5. We must examine *what thoughts as welcome guests are suffered to lodge within us*. 'Tis said of wicked men that *God is not in all their thoughts*, Psal. 10. 4. but wicked and vain thoughts are delightful and abide in them. Proud, revengeful, covetous, filthy, and all sinful thoughts, are *vain thoughts*; because they are to no good end or purpose, nay, to very bad purpose; Now if such thoughts as these *lodge in the heart*, the *heart is not washed from its wickedness*, and they will hinder salvation, Jer. 4. 14. But if holy thoughts are cherished, and there is a complacency in them, more of them are desired, and sinful thoughts are a burthen, which the heart is weary of, and does conflict with, and wishes their expulsion: This does speak a gracious frame of spirit.

6. We

6. We must examine *what power we have of Spiritual discerning.* The Gospel is hid from the natural man which proves him in a lost state, 2 Cor. 4. 3. The things of the spirit of God are foolishness to him; and he counts it the greatest wisdom to secure things visible. That Rich man, Luk. 12. thought he had been mighty provident and prudent, in laying up goods for many years. But if we are Saints indeed, we have a faculty of Spiritual discerning and judge quite otherwise: and our judgment is this, and that judgment is true; namely, *That all are fools, and poor and miserable, that are not rich in Grace, rich towards God, and that have made no provision for Eternity.* God called the forementioned Rich man a Fool, upon this score. And as the Lord calls the worldly-minded, Fools, so after death they will call themselves by that name, and curse their folly everlastingly.

7. We must examine *what we elect and make choice of as our chief Good,* and take up with us the best Portion. The men of the World are contented with a Portion here in this Life, here they receive all their Consolation; they live as they think very well, *without God in the World,* and do not care to know, to serve, or to enjoy him. But if we are Saints we follow other Counsels, we chuse the Lord
for

for our Portion and resolve to obey him, *Psal. 119. 57. Thou art my Portion O Lord, I have said that I would keep thy Word,* we are persuaded of his al-sufficient goodness, which is abundantly communicative of it self, and desire him above all. And the Lord himself being our Portion, we are pleased we are satisfied, we rejoyce and conclude *the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, and that we have a very goodly heritage,* *Psal. 16. 5, 6.*

8. We must examine whether our naturally beloved sin be now loathed. They that are sincere are made so wise as to find out their *dilectum delictum*, darling iniquity, or if more than one have been their darlings they take special notice of them; and though they are alienated from the whole kind of Sin, yet with more than ordinary vehemency they desire the mortification of the lust or lusts which were formerly most beloved, because these have so loaded them with guilt, have most of all defiled them, and provoked the Lord most bitterly against them. *David* proves his uprightness this way, *Psal. 18. 23. I was also upright before thee and I kept my self from mine iniquity.* But as for those who resolve to spare their darling corruptions, they are unsound; these lusts will cost them the life of their Souls. And are not those

pro-

prodigies of folly who love sin so well, as to be contented to be damned for the sake of it! If *Herod* will keep his *Herodias* still against the admonition of *John* the Baptist, it plainly argues that he is void of Grace, though he bears gladly and in part practises the Word he hears.

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9. We must examine what pre-eminence Heaven has above Earth in our affections. A wicked man when he comes to dye, will prefer Heaven before Hell; but a Saint prefers Heaven before Earth; and when his heart treacherously hankers after earthly things he checks and chides it; he goes unto God and complains of this, and prays to be made more heavenly minded. He is convinced of the vanity and fading nature of earthly things, and chuses the *better and enduring substance.* 'Tis a sign we are enlightened and renewed by the same Spirit, the Apostle was, when we speak his Language, 2 Cor. 4. 18. *We look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen, are Temporal; but the things which are not seen are Eternal.*

10. We must examine what is our great End and Design. The wicked man is swayed by carnal, sinful, and worldly self: Worldly

ly honour, pleasure, and advantage, are the highest, indeed the only things he seeks. If our Ends are not right, we cannot possibly be upright our selves. Now our End ought to be the glorifying of God and the enjoyment of Him. *Whatever ye do, says the Apostle, do all to the glory of God,* 1 Cor. 10. 31. This should still be in the Christians eye and aim; And truly the designing of Gods glory is the way to the enjoyment of him, wherein our own glory and happiness does consist. *Those that honour God he will honour;* whatever thwarts this highest, greatest End, is to be avoided with the greatest care: for we cannot dishonour or despise the Lord, but *ipso facto* we degrade and prejudice our selves.

11. *II.* We must examine, *whether we are not grieved at all discovered defects and miscarriages, and desirous to have every thing amiss rectified and amended.* Though upon search we find much out of order, nay nothing in such order, every way as it should be; if this be our serious trouble, and we long indeed to be turned: long to be *savingly changed*; long to be *thoroughly healed*: 'tis a sign of some hopeful beginnings if they do but hold. Ephraim bemoaned himself that he was as a Bullock unaccustomed to the Yoke, he found a great reluctancy in corrupted nature, and loathsomeness to

to submit to the Yoak of God ; he is troubled at it, and falls a praying for converting grace : *Turn thou me and I shall be turned,* his prayer is heard, he is turned, he is instructed, he repented, he is adopted, and assured at last of mercy ; *Is Ephraim my dear Son ? Is he a pleasant Child ? For since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him and I will surely have mercy on him saith the Lord,* Jer. 31. 18, 19, 21.

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In the third place I am to inform you concerning what we are to prove our selves. And at present I shall only insist on those two things which the Apostle mentions in the Context. We are to prove *whether we are in the Faith,* and *whether Christ be in us,* yea or no ?

1. We are to prove *whether we are in the Faith.* Sometimes Faith is said *to be in us,* because it is a grace infused by the Spirit of God into our hearts ; *With the heart man believeth unto Righteousness,* Rom. 10. 10., Sometimes we are said *to be in Faith,* in opposition to others that are unregenerate, who are affirmed to be *in the flesh,* and to be *in their sins.* And there is good reason for this phrase, that the Saints are *in Faith,* because

Faith does *cloth* them with a justifying Righteousness, and is a *Shield* to cover them, and to *quench* all the fiery Darts of the evil one. Now whether we are in the Faith, may be thus proved;

1. If we are in the Faith, *Truths being firmly believed will be particularly applied*, our assent will be firm unto the truth of the Gospel, as being of Divine Authority. And as we shall believe that God himself does speak in his Word, so we shall believe that he speaks to *us* in particular. This particular application of the Word, we read of, *Job. 5. ult. Lo this we have searched it, so it is, see it and know it for thy good.* A Medicine if not applied will not heal, and the Word if not applied by Faith will not profit, *Heb. 4. 2. But the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with Faith in them that heard it.* When Divine Commands are particularly applied, we shall look upon our selves as obliged to obey them, and submit to the Authority of our great Law-giver who has power to save and to destroy. When comminations and threatnings are applied unto our Sins in particular, we shall be afraid to allow of those Sins which bring us under the lash of threatnings so very dreadful. And as for the promises of God, being particularly applied, how

how certainly will they be accomplished!

2. Our Faith will be joynd with Godly sorrow and repentance, Act. 20. 21. Testifying both to Jews and Greeks Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jēsus Christ. The Hypocrites Faith is usually without Repentance; he is a stranger to godly sorrow, and yet he is full of confidence; or his repentance is without Faith, he lies down like *Cain* or *Judas* under the burthen of his guilt and utterly despairs of mercy. I grant that weak believers have strong temptations to despair. But the God of hope bears up their hearts by an unseen hand, so that they neither desperately destroy themselves, nor come to this resolution; since there is no hope but they must be damn'd, they will be damn'd for something, and so run out to all excess of riot. If our Faith be true, Sin will be our grief and detestation, and there will be *μετενοια εἰς τὸ θεόν*, a change in our minds and rendring our hearts unto God.

3. If we are in the Faith, Christ is no longer a stone of stumbling, but exceeding precious in our esteem, 1 Pet. 2. 6, 7. He is lookt upon as the power of God and the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God in contriving such a way of salvation is admired, and the power of Christ to save to the uttermost is believed. The A

posse counted *all things but loss & dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord*, Phil. 3. 8. 'Tis impossible a man should be a true Believer and not have an high value for the Lord Jesus. His Person is precious, He is the Fathers equal, his Darling, and *the Brightness of his Glory*. He is the Angels wonder, and *they all are commanded to worship him*, Heb. 1. 3. 6. He is the Churches Head, and supplies the whole Body with his fulness, Eph. 1. ult. *And gave him to be Head over all things to the Church which is his Body the fulness of him that filleth all in all*. And as the Person of Christ so the Blood of Christ is said to be *precious*, 1 Pet. 1. 19. Ye were redeemed *with the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot*. His benefits are precious. True Faith counts Him *altogether lovely*, and hinders any offence from being taken at him, Matth. 11. 6.

4. Our Faith will purifie our hearts, Act. 15. 9. *And put no difference between us and them purifying their hearts by faith*. Faith is persuaded of the holiness of God, and that he searches the heart, and trieth and weigheth the spirits of the children of men: 'tis also persuaded that only the *pure in heart shall see God*, or are fit to see him, Mat. 5. 8.

No wonder therefore if the consequent of Faith be a following after holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12. 14. Faith moreover takes notice of the End of Christs dying, which was that he might sanctifie and cleanse his Church, and present it unto himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it might be holy and without blemish, Eph. 5. 26, 27. and hence we have a plaec for holiness which is very effectual to obtain it. Finally, Faith applies the promises of sanctification, the promises of a new heart and of a new spirit, Ezek. 36. 25, 26. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you, A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And by such promises as these, Believers who account them exceeding great and precious, are made partakers of the Divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the World through lust, 2 Pet. 1. 4.

5. If we are in the Faith our faith will work, and work by love. Ephes. 5. 6. For in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which work.

worketh by love. The Apostle tells us that *faith without works is dead, as the body is dead without the spirit.* Jam. 2. ult. Faith derives strength from Christ, whereby we yield obedience to the will of God, as well as relies upon his justifying righteousness. But all works will not prove the truth of faith: but such works as proceed from love. We must pray because we love God, we must hear because we love him; we must live to him because we love him. There is a threefold love to God, of *Desire*, of *Benevolence* and *Complacency*: now though all that have true faith may not arrive so high, as to delight in God; yet all true believers do desire after God above all; and they bear such good will to him, as to wish him glorified more by themselves and others, and this shews the sincerity of their love.

6. Our Faith will *be weary of its contrary*: and we shall cry with earnestness, that the Lord would help our unbelief. The man in the Gospel was very much troubled at his infidelity; and therefore *cried out with tears* to Christ. *Lord I believe, i. e. I believe in part, and desire to believe more strongly, help thou my unbelief.* Mat. 9. 24. Unbelieving injections against God, against Christ, against the Spirit of grace, against the Word

of truth : are felt as so many buffets and blows upon an heart that truly believes. The believer desires to have his Assent to the Word of God more strong, that it may have the stronger influence ; and that his affections and actions may be such, as may suit his believing every syllable of the Bible to be true. He desires his reliance upon God, upon Christ, and upon the promises, may be more firm and steady. And oh what a value does he put upon a well-grounded assurance of *the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!* Rom. 8. ult.

7. If we are in the Faith, our faith *will give us victory over this present world.* 1 Joh. 5. 4. 5. *Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.* The believer is, so wise as *nihil admirari*, to admire nothing in this world. Our Lord Jesus himself had but little of this world : and cared not for it when *Satan* offered him all the Kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, he despised the offer. The Apostles were poor in the world ; and yet the special favourites of heaven : certainly the world is not a matter of extraordinary value. Most Saints have had but little of it, and those who have had much of it, have lived above it.

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Moses by Faith despised the pleasures of sin, and the treasures of *Ægypt*, and prefer'd even reproaches for Christ, and afflictions with the people of God before them. Though David was a King, and wore a Crown of pure gold on his head; yet his faith made him look upon himself as a stranger upon the earth. Psal. 39. 12. *I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner as all my fathers were.*

8. If we are indeed in the Faith, our faith will make the next world evident and desirable. 'Twill prove the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. Heb. 11. 1. Faith is the good and true Spy which searches the heavenly Country which is promised: and brings back word. That that Celestial Canaan is very glorious, that an innumerable company of Angels are there, and the Spirits of just men, and all made perfect, that God the Judge of all is there seen face to face: and there is Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, crown'd with glory and in his Fathers throne; that there is no need of the Sun or of the Moon to shine; for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. Rev. 21. 2. Finally, that sin and sorrow are eternall strangers, but there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. And Faith giving such a report of the world to come, no wonder that 'tis judged

judged worth seeking, and that with an holy violence. Mat. 11. 12. *The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

2. We are to prove our selves, *whether Christ be in us, yea or no?* Christ and Satan divide the world, all that have not Christ in them, Satan has possession of, he is the *Spirit that works in the children of disobedience.* Now whether Christ be really in us, may be thus proved and discerned.

1. If Christ be in us, *he has entred by the door of the understanding,* we cannot be totally ignorant of him. True Faith cannot be without knowledge. Rom. 10. 14. *How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?* We must know who and what he was, that undertook the work of our redemption; how else can we rely upon him? He is *near a kin to us as Man,* and is a *merciful and faithful high Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* Heb. 2. 17. and surely he was able to finish that work which he undertook, for *he is over all God blessed for ever, Amen.* Rom. 9. 5. We must also know the benefits of Christ, that we may know what to rely upon him for, now these benefits are most necessary suitable and excellent,

cellent, as pardon of Sin, adoption to be the Sons of God; sanctifying grace, and endless glory. Nay Christ *is all in all*, and Christ being given, nothing will be denied. Rom. 8. 32. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.*

2. If Christ be in us, *our very hearts have been opened to receive him.* When Christ has knockt at the door we have given him admission; it has been our souls language, *Come in thou blessed Lord, wherefore standest thou without.* And this receiving of Christ is indeed believing in him. Joh. 1. 12. *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God even to them that believe on his Name.* The heart has been convinced that 'tis most highly rational to give entertainment to this Lord of life and glory. He uses the strongest arguments for admission, makes the greatest offers; delivers all out of the depths of misery, and advances them, to be Saints, Sons, Priests, Kings, who shall Reign most gloriously and happily to Eternity, that do indeed embrace him.

Christ be in us, *the dominion of Sin and our Idols have been thrown down.* When Darius the Persian Emperour offered half his

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Empire to the Conquering *Alexander* : *Alexander* gave this Answer, That in the Firmament there was but one Sun, and there must be but one Emperor in Persia : and therefore continued his Wars, till *Darius* had lost both Life and Kingdom. In like manner there cannot be two Rulers in one heart. If Christ be there, no iniquity has the dominion any longer. Where Christ is he works a change, so that persons are no longer foolish, disobedient and deceived ; they no longer serve divers lusts and pleasures, Tit. 3. 3. And whatsoever has been idolized, be it profit, pleasure, applause : now 'tis disesteemed that Christ alone may be exalted.

4. If Christ be in us, we approve and value his Kingdom, as well as his Priesthood. We shall like and love the Lord Jesus, as a Prince upon the Throne ; consenting that that Throne should be our hearts, as well as a Priest upon the Cross, and shall be very desirous to be more fully subdued to him. His Yoke is judged easie and his burthen light, Mat. 11. ult. Christ is really no hard Matter, though the World think him to be so. They that are in Christ, and experience what kind of Ruler he is, and that he rules by a Law of Faith, and Love, and Liberty, are very glad of his Kingly Office. It was matter of praise and

and thanksgiving to the Apostle that he and other Believers had been made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light : and also that God had delivered them from the power of darkness, and had translated them into the Kingdom of his dear Son, Col. 1. 12, 13.

5. If Christ be in us, *his Word is entertain'd and abides in us also.* We cannot flight that Word which discovers Christ and was the great means to bring us to Him. *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly,* says the Apostle, Col. 3. 16. And hearken what Christ himself speaks, *Joh. 15. 7. If ye abide in me and my Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done to you.* Oh with what gladness do Believers give entertainment to the Word, since they may have what they will if the Word abide in them ! and this Word will rectifie their judgments, and regulate their wills, so that they shall will nothing but what is truly for their good ; and what is really for their good shall most readily be granted. Now Christ and his Word abide together. But Christ is rejected if his Word be not received. *Joh. 12. 48. He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my Word, hath one that judgeth him ; the Word that I have spoken the same shall judge him at the last day.* 6. If

6. If Christ be in us, we have the Spirit of Christ, Rom. 8. 9. The Apostle does so plainly intimate this truth that he asserts, the want of Christs Spirit undoubtedly shews there is no interest in him. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.* As all the Members of the Natural Body, are animated and acted by the same Soul, which in a special manner shews it self in the Head: so the same Spirit which is without measure in Christ the Head, does animate and act all the true Members of his Body mystical. Now where the Spirit of Christ is he enlightens the mind, opens the eyes of the understanding, he makes a new Creature. 2 Cor. 5. 17. *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are past away, and all things become new.* The old Adam and deceitful lusts are put off, and the new man put on, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. This Spirit of Christ mortifies the deeds of the Body, Rom. 8. 13. and causes those who are led by him, to walk in the Lords Statutes, and he fills them with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God.

7. If we are in Christ and he in us, we shall endeavour to walk as he walked. He is the unerring Pattern; to be followers of Christ

is certainly to go right. 'Tis in vain to say that we abide in him unless in some measure we resemble him : and long to be more and more conformable to the Image of the Son of God. The Apostle tells us, *1 Joh. 2. 6. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked.* When we go about doing good ; when 'tis our meat and drink to do the work and business of our heavenly Father ; when we walk in meekness and humility not *rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing, but overcome evil with good,* then the same mind that was in Christ our Lord, is also in us, and 'tis evident that Christ is in us of a truth.

8. If Christ be in us, we shall account it our happiness to be where he is and to behold his glory. As long as we are upon Earth we are in a vale of Tears : Sin remaining we cannot be free from trouble ; the remainders of flesh and corruption will make us sigh and cry, *O wretched ! Rom. 7. 24. But when we are absent from the Body we shall be present with the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 8.* and then we shall be compleatly freed from whatever is matter of complaint and sorrow. Believers value Heaven though the hypocritical and carnal are earthly minded. The Apostle propounds it as the highest comfort, that Believers shall

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certainly be with the Lord, and *shall be ever with the Lord*, 1 Thes. 4. ult. And Christ himself prays for this, as the top of his Disciples happiness, *Joh. 17. 24. Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* This he promises to his Disciples, to bear up their hearts, and arm them against all fears and troubles whatsoever, *Joh. 14. 3. If I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to my self, that where I am there ye may be also.*

In the fourth place follows the *Manner how we are to prove our selves.*

1. In Self-proving, *Self-love and Self-flattery must be banished.* Wicked men are said to *flatter themselves in their own eyes until their iniquity be found to be hateful*, Psal. 36. 2. that is, till punishment overtake them and thoroughly convince them, how hateful sin is in the eyes of an holy and Righteous God. Self-flattery has undone thousands; rather than have bad thoughts of themselves, and their own condition, they will frame a strange conception of God, and think him *like themselves*; and 'tis ordinary to cry peace and promise safety to themselves till sudden destruction come upon them, *Psal. 50. 21,*

22. *These things hast thou done and I kept silence, and thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thy self: but I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver. We must therefore deal plainly with our selves and pass a true judgment.*

2. *A sufficient time must be allotted and allowed for this matter. What is our time given us for, but that we may make provision and sure work for Eternity. Qui cito pronunciat, ad pauca respicit. He that judgeth hastily, commonly judgeth amiss. We must sequester our selves from other business, that we may have a full conference with our selves; Commune with your own heart upon your Bed, says David, and be still, Psal. 4. 4. that is, when you are retired do this; and be at leisure to understand what your hearts have to say for, or against themselves. If we commune but little, but seldom with our hearts we may live and die ignorant of them.*

3. *Self-proving ought to be managed with all possible seriousness and concernedness of spirit. Matters which relate to our Estates and Livelihood are minded seriously: and especially*

cially we do not trifle in matters of Life and Death. But how much more serious should we be in a business upon which our eternal welfare does so very much depend? A Mistake about our selves and our Spiritual Estate would be an undoing mistake indeed, and after Death 'twill be perceived and lamented, but 'twill be too late to rectifie and amend it. And how much will it increase our woe, to go out of the World with confidence that *all's Well*, and find our selves in Hell immediately after our dissolution, where our condition will be so *very ill and never, never to be altered!* Our fear therefore must be the greater of being deceived, and our care the more diligent to prevent it.

4. We must be willing to *Examine and Ransack our selves to the very bottom*: to know the worst, to know the best, to know the whole of our selves. Travellers have taken a great deal of pains and gone many a weary step to view the greater World. Man is a *Microcosm*, little World. And as in the greater World, there is *Terra Incognita*, much Land unknown: so 'tis in this *lesser World*, much of it remains undiscovered. Curiosity acts the Travellers, in the viewing of Cities and Nations; but truly Necessity should make us to take a view of our selves, because

Self-ignorance is so dangerous and damnable. We are endued with a great many powers and faculties : we have various affections, desires, and inclinations ; many imaginations, reasonings and designs. All these are corrupted by nature, and need be renewed by the grace of God. We should therefore be the more strict in searching, that Sin wherever it lurks may not escape our knowledge, and that grace also may be made manifest.

5. All along, the aid of the Spirit of God is to be called in. David says, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? and whether shall I flee from thy presence ?* Psal. 139. 7. The Spirit searcheth all things even the deep things of God, 1 Cor. 2. 10. Surely then the Spirit can discover the deepest things in Man. 'Tis the work of the Spirit to reprove the World of Sin. He takes away the Fig leaves of excuses, and presents Sin naked and bare. He wipes off the paint that is upon Sin, and shews the exceeding sinfulness of it ; that it may be lamented and abhorred ; He discovers also the truth of Grace : and he does both infallibly ; His light and help therefore is the more to be desired.

6. Self-proving must be presently. Delays are

are dangerous, life is uncertain : 'tis sad to be at uncertainties, in reference to a future, a better life. Now is the time to obey the call of the Gospel, and now is the time to make *our calling sure* ; it concerns us to be speedy and to give *diligence* to do it, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Sinners* had need to make haste and to find out their sores quickly and their lost Estate, while a Physician and a Saviour is near them. *Saints* have reason to be speedy in Self-trial for perhaps it may be long before a well-grounded assurance be attained.

7. Self-proving must *frequently be renewed*. We must not take one, or the first report of our own hearts ; but must call them to Task and bring them to the Touchstone again and again. We must observe our selves, what we are *before Men*, and what we are in *secret* ; when only God takes Cognisance of us. We must observe what we are in *good Company*, and what in *bad*. And if we are good *only* for Company, truly we shall be bad also for Company sake. We must try and see how we carry it in *prosperity*, and how *under affliction* : what we are in *duty*, and what we prove in the hour of *temptation*. A Painter if he will give an exact Description of a City or a Palace, will draw a prospect of it Eastward, Westward, Northward, Southward. So we

should often view our selves in several conditions, in several actions, in several trials and temptations that we may be able to judge the more truly.

8. In Self-proving we must *never give over till we have brought the matter to an issue.* If we cannot sound our selves, the first or second, or tenth or twentieth time ; yet we should not cease, but hold on the rather in Self-examination. The Woman in the Gospel which had lost the piece of Silver *did light a Candle and sought diligently till she found it*, Luk. 15. 8. In like manner we should take the Candle of the Word of God, and seek diligently till we find whether we have grace or no. Christ asked concerning the Tribute Money, *whose Image and Superscription it had ?* So we should ask, *Whose Image we bear ?* If the Image of God be upon us, his Superscription is upon us, and we really belong to him. But if the Image of Satan be upon us, he lays claim to us as his Children ; because in regard of evil, we resemble that Evil One. Well let us not give over in searching till we know whose we are : Both Sin and Grace are worth finding out ; Sin, that it may be dealt with as an Enemy and subdued ; Grace, that it may be own'd with thankfulness and consolation.

9. After we have done all, we must look unto the Holy Ghost for his sealing and witness. As the Spirit by discovering Sin and Hell and Wrath, works *bondage and fear*; so the Spirit infuses Grace, shines upon that grace, discovers the truth of it and works *assurance*. The Holy Spirit of God dwells in the Saints and seals them to the day of redemption, Eph. 4. 30. His work is to witness their Adoption, so that with confidence they cry *Abba Father*, Gal. 4. 6. The Apostle speaks of a twofold testimony concerning the Saints Adoption, the testimony of *their Spirits*, the testimony of *Gods Spirit*, Rom. 8. 16. *The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirits that we are the Children of God.* The Spirit of Believers comparing their Hearts and the Word together, may give a testimony that they are the Children of God; But if this testimony be single, 'tis not so valid; as one Witness under the old Law was not a full Evidence: This Testimony when alone, will be cavell'd at and contradicted by the Accuser of the Brethren, and will be questioned by the heart it self. But when the Spirit of the Lord superadds his Testimony, then there is Light and Liberty; then Adoption is apparent: God is confidently called Father, peace and joy follows: the State is now clear'd, Grace is evidenced, and future Glory is upon good ground expected.

In the fifth place, I am to inform you by what *Rule and Touchstone*, this proof of our selves is to be made. If our Rule be false or insufficient, our judgments of our selves must needs be wrong. Before I discourse concerning the right Touchstone, I shall lay down some cautionary Rules in this matter.

1. We must not try our selves so as to judge of our Spiritual and Eternal State, by the *Moral Law taken in its utmost latitude and extent*. By the Law indeed is the knowledge of Sin: and having discovered Sin it leaves the Sinner under the curse and condemnation. *Gal. 3. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* If therefore we were to try our selves by the Law and the exceeding breadth of it, all, even the best must conclude themselves accursed: because *in many things all do transgress and offend, Jam. 3. 2. David* prays against a strict sentence according to the just Law of God; for according to this he knew it would go ill with him and all flesh besides. *Psal. 143. 2. Enter not into judgment with thy Servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.* And the Apostle affirms, *By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, Rom. 3. 20. Blessed be God!* that through Jesus Christ is preached unto us the forgiveness of sins, and

by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses, Act. 13. 38, 39.

2. When looking into the truth of our Graces, we must not prove our selves by the characters of Grace in the higher actings of it. Some are but Lambs, and yet are truly of Christs Fold, though they cannot keep pace with the stronger of the Flock: Such therefore the great Shepherd has promised to carry in his bosom, Esa. 40. 11. Some are but babes in Christ, and yet are truly the Children of God as well as those who are strong men. If we look upon Abraham we find him strong in Faith; believing against hope, and thereby giving glory to God, Rom 4. 18, 20. We find David rejoycing, and professing that God was the gladness of his joy; and his Soul is satisfied and ravished with a sence of his excellent loving-kindness, Psal. 43. 4. The Apostle Paul is fully persuaded of the love of God, is got above all doubts and fears, and insults over all, as being confident that nothing shall be able to separate him, from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. 8. ult. He is not terrified at Death, but desires to depart and to be with Christ which is best of all, Phil. 1. 23. But now these which I have mentioned are the higher actings of Grace.

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And if weak Believers should try themselves by such examples as these, Satan would get advantage, and their doubts and discouragements would but increase upon them.

3. In proving our selves we must take heed of *making an ill use of the falls of Saints*, which are recorded in Scripture. *Dauids uncleanness, Lots drunkenness* are no arguments to prove, that any may allow themselves in filthiness and intemperance and yet go to Heaven. Nay the Scripture expressly says the contrary, *Eph. 5. 5. For this ye know that no Whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an Idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, of God: and all words that would persuade otherwise, are but deceitful and vain, v. 6.* The falls of Saints are mentioned not to encourage unto sin, but to prevent despair, and to encourage to repentance and returning unto God, when there has been a departing from him. And truly they are in a state quite different from the Saints, who are only like them in their *falls*, but not like them in their rising again, Righteousness and Repentance.

4. We must beware of thinking it *sufficient to have escaped the more gross pollutions of the World.* When we compare our selves

selves with the vilest of men, and find our selves unlike them, this is not enough to prove our selves, or our state truly good. It was not enough to justifie the Pharisee before God, that others were extortioners, unjust and adulterers, but he was free from such gross and scandalous crimes as these, *Luk. 18. 11*. There are degrees of Sin as well as Grace. 'Tis but a small commendation, *Pessimis esse meliorem* to be better than the very worst of all: we may be bad enough to ruine us for all that. The Pharisees were righteous and blameless in the eyes of men, but Christ saw how proud and how unsanctified their hearts were; therefore he says, *Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 5. 20.*

5. The providences of God must not be our Rule of Trial: We must not judge of our spiritual condition by present external dispensations. You find a wicked man in purple and fine linnen, faring sumptuously every day, and a godly man a beggar laid at his gate full of Sores, desirous to be fed with the Crumbs that fell from the rich mans Table, *Luk. 16*. The righteous are plagued all the day long and chastened every morning: when the wicked prosper in the World, and increase in riches and have more than heart could wish, *Psal. 73*.

12, 14. If thriving in this World be all thou hast to shew as an evidence of the love of God ; thou hast indeed nothing at all to shew as an argument he loves thee with a special love ; for *Solomon* says, *No man knows either love or hatred by all that is before them ; but all things fall alike to all, and there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked*, Eccles 9. 1, 2.

6. We must take heed of a *wrong notion of the Grace of God in Christ ; which may encourage licentiousness and presumption.* We must not look upon him as *all Justice, Jealousie, Fury* ; neither must we imagine him *all Grace and Mercy.* We must not look upon our Lord *Jesus as the Minister of sin.* Gal. 2. 17. for he was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil. 1 Joh. 3. 8. 'tis unreasonable therefore to continue in sin that grace may abound. Rom. 6. 1. We must be fully persuaded that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* Heb. 12. 14. for if the necessity of holiness be not apprehended, we shall entertain a presumptuous confidence in the grace of God, and indulge our lusts at the same time.

7. We must take heed of putting our selves upon the Tryal, farther than the Scripture ever does. As whether we can be contented to be damned that God may be glorified ? Whether we would be so strict and circumspect as the word requires, if there were no future reward

reward or punishment? 'Tis not good to make suppositions, which God in his word never makes. As whether if we might live here in this world for ever, we could be very well contented? Whether if God were to be enjoyed but for a time, we should prefer that enjoyment, before an everlasting fruition of the creature? Such suppositions as they have no Scripture warrant, so they but perplex them that make them. We must take things as they are, and not suppose them to be what they are not. And if things visible which are but *temporal*, are despised in comparison of invisible things which are *eternal*, it argues the heart is wise to make a right choice.

Having laid down these cautionary Rules, I come now to speak of the Right *Touchstone*, by which this Tryal of our selves is to be made; and that is the *Written word of God*. Saints cannot ascend into heaven at present, and immediately search the Book of life, to know whether their names are there registered. Neither must they expect that an Angel should come to them as to *Daniel* of old, to inform them that they are greatly beloved. Neither shall the wicked and the hypocritical ones have an hand appearing as once to *Belshazzar*, signifying how bad their state is, and how sad their end is like to be. But to the written word

word all must repair, that they may know what to conclude concerning themselves. Now the word of God gives us a description and characters both of a *state of nature*, and of a *state of Grace*. The Prisoner at the bar which is tryed for his life, with what trembling does he expect the verdict of the Jury. When we are trying our selves in reference to Eternity: Oh with what fear and trembling should we attend what sentence the word of God will pass upon us.

1. I begin with a description of a State of Nature. Now the Scripture pronounces those in a state of nature,

1. *Who have a vail of grosse and black ignorance upon their hearts.* As 'tis life eternal to know, so it must needs be granted to be no less than eternal death, to be grossly ignorant of the *only true God*, and *Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*. How can we obey that great Command of the Law, to love the Lord with all our hearts, or that great Command of the Gospel, to believe in Jesus Christ: if concerning both God and Christ there be a very gross ignorance? Ignorance is commonly rejoyced in as an excuse for sin: but it proves destructive where 'tis thus liked. *Hos. 4. 6.*
My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Prove your own selves. 47

2 Cor. 4. 3. *If our Gospel be hid, 'tis hid to them that are lost. And Isa. 27. 11. It is a people that have no understanding, therefore he that made them will not save them, and he that formed them will shew them no favor.*

2. They are in a state of Nature, who believe not the report of the Gospel. The word speaks terribly against such as esteem the Gospel no more, than if it were a cunningly devised Fable, who stand no more in awe of it than if it were not of Divine Original, and Authority; but meerly of humane invention. Joh. 3. ult. *He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Mar. 16. 16. *He that believeth not shall be damned.* Joh. 8. 24. *If ye believe not that I am He, the true Messiah, the only Saviour: ye shall die in your sins.* Hell is in a special manner called the portion of the unbelievers. If Jesus Christ the only expiatory sacrifice for sins be despised; there remaineth no other, besides: but a certain fearful looking for of vengeance, and of fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. Heb. 10.

3. They are in a state of Nature, that are resolved workers of iniquity. Let the Lord be never so angry, and threaten what he pleases, they dare to sin notwithstanding.
Children

Children of disobedience must needs be the children of wrath. Col. 3. 6. *The wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.* Those whose hearts speak that language. Jer. 44. 16. *As for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken to thee:* but are bewitched by the pleasure and gain of sin still to continue the servants of it; these are the persons which shall at last receive the wages of sin, death eternal. 'Tis a mad resolution to be proud, and filthy, and unjust, and profane, whatever the Gospel commands to the contrary: 'tis in effect to give consent to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. 2. *Thes* 1. 8. 9.

4. They are in a state of Nature, who under a profession of Religion practise wickedness secretly, or at least regard iniquity in their hearts. How many woes does our Lord thunder out against Hypocrites in one Chapter! and at last concludes with a terrible vehemency! *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* Mat. 23. 33. Hell is especially prepared for the Hypocrites; as well as for the unbelievers. If our hearts and hands are full of wickedness, malice, filthiness, and secret dishonesty; if we can

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commit sin delightfully and securely as long as 'tis done closely, what do all our duties signifie? The Lord abhors both us and them. Hark how he speaks to such Hypocrites; *Bring no more vain oblations, Sabbaths and calling of Assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity even the solemn Meeting: they are a trouble to me I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you, and though you make many prayers yet I will not hear you.* Esa. 1. 13, 14, 15.

5. They are in a state of Nature who are lovers of this present World. 1 Joh. 2. 15. *Love not the World neither the things that are in the World; if any man love the World the love of the Father is not in him.* The love of the Father may be taken actively and passively. The lover of this World, has no sincere love to the Father, nor any interest in the Fathers special love. How plainly and severely does the Apostle James speak, Jam. 4. 4. *Ye Adulterers and Adulteresses know ye not that the friendship of the World is enmity with God, whoever therefore will be a friend of the World is the enemy of God.* Then we may be said to be friends and lovers of the World, when we conform to the sinful customs and manners and fashions of the

E World:

World : living by fence as the World does : and when in our hearts and eager pursuits we prefer the VWorld and the gain, delights and preferments of it before God, before Christ, before Grace, before Glory. Thou that in thy heart despisest a Treasure in Heaven, and really esteemest Silver and Gold of far greater value : 'tis as impossible for thee while of this mind, to go to *Heaven*, as for a *Camel to go through the eye of a Needle*. The young man in the Gospel was of an unblameable conversation : but he wanted one thing and indeed the principal to make him a real Saint, a true Disciple ; because he valued his great possessions above *Christ* and a *treasure in Heaven*, that was offered to him, *Mat. 19. 20, 24*. Of this mind was that worldly-minded *Papist*, who said, He would not leave his part in *Paris* for a part in *Paradise*.

6. They are in a state of Nature, *who go about to establish their own Righteousness* : this was the fault and the ruine of the *Jews* of old ; they thought their own righteousness sufficient, and the *establishing of their own righteousness*, was their own downfal ; a proud conceit of their own righteousness hindred them from *submitting to the righteousness of God*, *Rom. 10. 3*. Trusting in our righteousness will prove as destructive to us, as con-
tinuance

tinuance in our iniquities. If we think by our prayers and duties and deeds of righteousness to satisfie for the sins which we have committed against the Lord of Heaven: 'tis a sign we do not understand the Holiness and Justice of God, nor the nature and demerit of Sin, nor the imperfection of our very best services. 'Tis a sign of great pride, and that Jesus Christ and our need of him, are not rightly understood; and thus being whole in our own conceit, or thinking we can make our selves whole, we shall fall short of the onely Saviour, *who came to seek and to save that which is lost*, Luk. 9. 10. Who is a Physician not to the well, but to the sick; *Who came to call not the Righteous, but Sinners to repentance*, Mat. 9. 12, 13.

7. They are in a state of Nature, *who are haters of their Brethren*. God is love, but malice is one great part of the Devils Image. 1 Joh. 3. 15. *Whosoever hateth his Brother is a Murtherer; and ye know that no Murtherer hath eternal life abiding in him.* The malicious man, Cain is his Brother, Beelzebub is his Father; but he is certainly a stranger and enemy to the God of love and peace. Let a man speak never so confidently that *he is in the light*, yet if he hate his Brother *he is in darkness even until now*, 1 Joh. 2. 9.

to 1 Joh. 3. 10. *In this the Children of God are manifested, and the Children of the Devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his Brother. True love will suffer long and be kind, it will not envy or be easily provoked, it will bear and believe all things: it will forgive and cover a multitude of sins. But they that will not forgive others, 'tis expressly said themselves shall not be forgiven, Mat. 6. 15. If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Hatred of the Brethren is a black mark indeed; especially if the Brethren are hated because they faithfully reprove, and for their holiness sake.*

8. They are in a state of Nature, *who embrace damnable Heresies; being given up to strong delusions to believe a lye: This the Apostle tells us will end in damnation, 2 Thes. 2. 11, 12. I grant that true Saints may fall into Error, but the Elect of God, shall not finally be deceived in those doctrines which are fundamental and of absolute necessity to be believed in order to Salvation. True Saints do still hold the Head, and build upon the Rock Christ, though some of their building may be wood and hay and stubble. Those therefore, who deny the Lord that bought them,*
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and make light of the blood of Jesus, the price of the Churches redemption, are none of the Sheep of Christ, *and will bring upon themselves swift destruction*, 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2.

9. They never were but in a state of Nature, *who are total and final Apostates*. Such are compared to the *stony ground* and in time of temptation falling away, Christ says, they *had not root in themselves*, Mat. 13. 21. to 1 Joh. 2. 19. *If they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out that they might be made manifest they were not all of us*. The utter Apostate shall be fill'd with his own ways, and ripen himself apace for ruine; *Gods Soul shall have no pleasure in him, his drawing back will be to perdition*, Heb. 10. 38, 39. and his *last state worse than his beginning*. Thus the Word describes a *State of Nature*.

2. In the second place I am to describe out of the same Word of God, and give the signs of a *State of Grace*: and to shew you what are those things which accompany Salvation. Now the Scripture pronounces them in a *safe and good estate*.

1. Who come to the light and are willing to be searched. True Gold does not fear the

Touchstone, and true Grace can abide the trial, sincere Souls upon this very account like that preaching best which searches most; whereas unsound *Israel* could not bear the words of the Prophet, *Amos* 7. 10. There is a kind of Spiritual instinct in true Believers which inclines them both to a jealousie of themselves, and a desire to have their hearts laid open: whereas Hypocrites love the dark, and are contentedly, nay gladly ignorant of themselves. Our Lord speaks very plain: *Joh.* 3. 20, 21. *Every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be discovered; but every one that doth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.* Doest thou like the Word when 'tis most quick and powerful? When 'tis most sharp and piercing? Doest thou bring thy heart to the Lord, and say, *Search it O God?* Even throughout, and look into every corner and let no corruption lye concealed: let not so much as one lust be hid or spared? This willingness to be thus examined and proved, and to have the reins and heart tried, argues truth of grace.

2. They are in a State of Grace, *who are truly contrite and broken because of Sin.* *Psal.* 34. 18. *The Lord is nigh to them that are*

are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. He that is indeed contrite has been convinced of Sin by the Spirit of God, and has been made to see the evil in it, and the evil that will follow upon it: His sin and his misery have been perceived. He is grieved because he has sinned against the Lord, and wishes that his sorrow might be more abundant, because his sin has so much abounded, and he laments over a corrupted heart and nature which inclines him to nothing else but sin. His heart troubles him which is so hard, as well as wicked. He accuses himself, he judges himself before God: he loaths himself in his own sight. And now all sin is hated, he will divorce the *Herodias*, and consent that the *Benjamin* should go. Nay the sin which was like *Benjamin* the darling, is a *Benoni*, matter of the greatest sorrow. This hatred of all sin argues spiritual and saving understanding. *Psal. 119. 104. Through thy Precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way.* Sin ruines none but those that love it. Those that hate it generally, implacably and to the death, shall never dye and be destroyed by it. Certainly thou art sincere if thou hatest thy lusts that formerly were thy Lords, and if thou canst truly cry with *David*; *Psal. 119. 133. Order my steps in thy Word and let no iniquity have the dominion over me.*

3. Those are in a State of Grace, *who receive Jesus Christ the Son of God.* To reject Christ, binds all our guilt upon us, and fixes us under wrath, and 'tis in effect to refuse Salvation. *But to as many as receive him to them he gives power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his name, Joh. 1.*

12. If Christ be rightly and indeed received; he is received just as God offers him, as a Prince to Rule, as well as a Saviour from Wrath: to give Repentance, as well as remission of Sins, Act. 5. 31. Christ must be received as an able Saviour, as a willing Saviour, as the onely Saviour; and the whole of that Salvation whereof he is the Author must be valued. When he is received, there is a consent to cast all that offends him out of the heart to make room for him: and truly all of Christ is welcom; His strictest commands, his mortifying and sanctifying Spirit, his Yoak, his Burthen, his Reproach, his Cross, are welcom for his sake, as well as his Crown. If we do not sit down and count the cost, and first of all well understand, and then fully agree to the Articles and Terms on which Christ is to be received, we may easily deceive our selves.

4. Those are in a State of Grace, *who desire after God above all, and yield and give them-*

themselves unto the Lord. The Psalmist was a sincere Saint who said, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on Earth that I desire besides thee, i. e.* none as my great help, as my chief happiness besides thee. And notice is taken of the grace of God bestowed upon the Churches of *Macedonia*, because they gave their own selves to the Lord, 2 Cor. 8. 5. If thy eyes have been opened to see that God is a far greater good than the Creature, and a greater good to thee; and thou desirest and chusest the Lord himself who is so gracious and al sufficient, as incomparably the best portion, and art as willing to be *his* portion as to have him *thine*; this willingness shews thou art of the number of his people, and that his powerful grace, has been at work in thee. *Psal. 110. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* God is called the *portion of Jacob*, and *Israel* is styled *the rod of his inheritance*, Jer. 10. 16. God and his people chuse each other.

5. They are in a State of Grace, *who hunger and thirst after righteousness.* Our Lord pronounces such *blessed*; and if he blesses them they shall be blessed, and promises *they shall be filled*, Mat. 5. 6. Righteousness imputed, is, and that with very good reason prized by Believers, and Righteousness *inherent*

berent is earnestly desired, they long to be made more holy ; more holy in heart, more holy in all manner of conversation : to have cleaner hands, hearts purer ; they groan earnestly to be sanctified throughout in Body, Soul, and Spirit, and to be established unblameable in holiness to the end. Doeſt thou vehemently desire to be bettered by every mercy ? To be refined more and more every time thou art cast into the furnace of affliction ? And to become more holy by every Ordinance thou engageſt in ? This *Sacra Fames*, holy hunger is in thee, and thou art blessed.

6. Those are in a State of Grace, *who prize the Word of God at an high rate.* All that are born again *desire as new born Babes the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby,* 1 Pet. 2. 2. Hark to our Lord. *Joh. 8. 47. He that is of God heareth Gods words, ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God.* With good reason do gracious Souls value the Word of God, for it is the incorruptible seed whereof they are born again: 'tis the Food whereby they are nourished, 'tis the Physick whereby they are healed, 'tis the Cordial whereby they are revived, 'tis the Weapon wherewith they defend themselves against their spiritual Enemies ; Finally 'tis the

the main Deed they have to shew, for the heavenly inheritance, If this Word of God be understood, believed and received by thee, in the love of it; if thou desirest to be cast into the mould of the Word, and in all things to conform to it; if *Dauids* language be thine. *Psal. 119. 33, 34, 35. Teach me O Lord the way of thy Statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding and I shall keep thy Law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments for therein do I delight.* This will argue that thou hast a good and honest heart indeed.

7. Those are in a state of grace, *who have the Spirit of Prayer.* The Apostle *Paul* as soon as ever translated into this state, has this Character, *Behold he prayeth, Act. 9. 11.* 'tis more than probable, he had spoken the words of prayer many a time before, while he was a zealous Son of the *Jewish Church*: but now he prayed in Gods account, now he prayed in the holy Ghost. They that are hypocrites may excell in the gift of Prayer, God may be *much in their mouths*, and their expressions may be fluent and seemingly affectionate; when yet he is far from their reins. But the Spirit of grace and supplication is peculiar to the Saints. Now such as have
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the Spirit of prayer, their desires are drawn forth with greatest strength and fervour after Spiritual and eternal blessings. They intreat the favour of God and fellowship with him, with their whole heart: they beg for the increase of Faith, Fear, and Love, and every other grace, and that they may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God, and that being delivered from every evil work, they may be preserved to his heavenly Kingdom. Thus the *Spirit makes intercession for them, according to the will of God.* Rom. 8. 26, 27.

8. They are in a state of Grace, *who love the brethren.* 1 Joh. 3. 14. *Hereby we know we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.* Now right love to the brethren, is love with a pure heart, and a good conscience, 'tis a fervent love; 'tis love to all the Saints, though but poor in the world, though of a different persuasion. The image of God is loved wherever 'tis found, and the more of it is found, 'tis lookt upon as more lovely. 'Tis one thing to love the Saints, because they are good natured, because they are beautiful, because they are bountiful, because they are wise and discreet: and 'tis another thing to love them because they are holy.

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And truly if the more holy they are, the more we love them, and the more plainly they deal with us by reprehension and advice in order unto our progress in sanctification and holiness: the more and better we like them, this is a clear and solid evidence of our being Saints our selves. Moreover, true Saints are of a *publick* Spirit, they are concerned for the whole Church Militant, and cry aloud that she may be preserved in purity, unity, and love, and may more than conquer all enemies, and come at last to be Triumphant.

9. They are in a state of Grace, *who endure to the end, and are not weary of well-doing.* He that endures to the end shall be saved says Christ, and *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my Disciples indeed,* Joh. 8.

31. The sincerely Righteous ones, notwithstanding all difficulties, oppositions, trials, tribulations, *hold on their way, and they that have clean hands do wax stronger and stronger.*

Job. 17. 9. They fight the good fight of Faith to the last breath, and by patient continuance in well-doing they seek for glory, honour, and immortality, and at last lay hold on eternal life. *Rom. 2. 7.*

Thus you have the Touchstone of the Word

Word to prove your selves by. And what this *Word binds on earth, is bound in heaven; what this Word looses on earth, is loosed in heaven.* If you continue in a state which this Word pronounces bad, you will certainly be condemned; but if your state be such as this Word declares good, you will as certainly be acquitted, rewarded, and crown'd at the great approaching Day.

In the sixth place, I am to inform you of the *special seasons*, when this duty of self-proving is to be performed, and the seasons are these.

1. We ought to prove our selves, *before we engage in the ordinance of the Lords Supper.* There must be a Spiritual life, or else there cannot be a fitness to be a guest at the *Lords Table.* A dead Corps set at a Feast, would be a frightful Spectacle to all there, neither could a dead body eat any of the dainties prepared. He that is dead in trespasses and sins, is not a worthy Communicant, for he wants the grace of Faith, which is as the eye to discern, the hand to receive, and the mouth to eat the Lord Jesus, who is the bread of life. The Lords Supper is not an Ordinance designed to work the first grace, for if 'twere, then none ought to be excluded; the

the greatest Sinners are to be admitted to converting Ordinances: and there would be no such thing as Excommunication in the Church of Christ. But the design of it is to increase, and strengthen, and make more and more evident that grace which is already wrought. Therefore we must prove what we are before we engage. 1 Cor. 11. 28, 29. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lords body.*

We ought to prove our Spiritual state, and examine our proficiency, and eye the present frame of our hearts. And though upon trial we cannot absolutely say we have grace, yet if there be no black and apparent marks of unregeneracy, and only probable signs of our being sanctified, yet we ought to come to the Table, that our Faith may be strengthened, the work of sanctification carried on, and our selves in that sealing Ordinance, *sealed unto the day of redemption.* Are we willing that every sin should die? Are we willing that the world should be thrown out of the highest room in our hearts? Are we willing to receive *Christ*, and *all the benefits* he gives forth in this Ordinance? Are we

we willing to resign and render *our souls, and all that is within us*; even our whole man to him? If we can answer in the affirmative to all; upon our coming to the Table we shall be made welcome; whatever an unbelieving heart may fear and suggest to the contrary.

2. We ought to prove our selves *before solemn prayer and humiliation*. In solemn supplication Solomon speaks of it as necessary, that every one should understand the plague of his own heart, when he spreads forth his hands towards the house of God, 1 King. 8. 38. Now the heart must be examined what it ayls, that the plague of it may be found out. The Priest under the law was to look again and again upon the person suspected of leprosie. The plagues of the heart lie deep many times, and are not easily discerned, there must be the more heedful examination. And as we are to find out the plagues of our hearts, so all our wants and weaknesses: and all are to be spread before the God of all grace, who can, because most high, perform all things for us, and cure every malady, and supply all our needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

3. We ought to prove our selves *after falls,*
though

though believers shall never fall from a state of grace, yet they may fall into several acts of sin. And when their falls are more foul and scandalous; their peace is broken: The holy Spirit their Comforter being grieved, their comfort and joy takes wings and flies away. The guilt they contract fills them with fear, and brings them under great bondage, their evidences are blotted, and their state seemsto be very questionable. Now therefore it concerns them to prove themselves, that they may find out the lurking corruption that betrayed them: and that they may be sensible of the heinous nature, and high aggravations of the sins they have committed: that being truly humbled they may cry with fervency for pardon and cleansing, and that the joy of Gods salvation may be restored.

David after he had defiled *Bathsheba* the Wife, and murdered *Uriah* the Husband: he renews the Search into himself, he traces these filthy streams till he came to the fountain, the original corruption of his nature; he is sensible what an impure and deceitful heart he had, and therefore cries out, *Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me.* Psal. 51. 10. he found that his fall had fill'd him with anguish, and very

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66 *Prove your own selves.*

much enfeebled him ; therefore he prays, *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.* v. 12. His sin stared him in the face, and he begs that God would hide his face from it, and withal he offers the acceptable sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart to him.

4. We ought to prove our selves in the time of *Spiritual desertion*. When God had withdrawn from the Psalmist, and so far withdrawn, as that he almost questioned whether ever he would return again ; and therefore cries out, *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more ?* then he communed with his own heart, and his Spirit made diligent search. *Psalm* 77. 6, 7. David enquires, why his God had forsaken him ; and why he was so far from helping him, and from the words of his roaring. *Psalm* 22. 1. and Job under desertion cries out, *Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burthen to myself ?* Job. 7. 20.

Spiritual desertions are very uncomfortable, these are the hours wherein the powers of darkness buffet believers, and unbelief, and deadness, and corruptions prevail. Saints therefore should question themselves severely, what they have been, and done, which

has grieved and quenched the Blessed Spirit; that they may lament their sin, and loss; and lament after God: they are also to reflect upon former experiences of special kindness, and call to remembrance their Songs in the night, and the years of the right hand of the Most High: and the consideration of Gods unchangeable love, and his sure and everlasting Covenant, should keep them from sinking into despondency. Finally they are to observe the design of God in withdrawing, and be the more humble, distrustful of themselves, depending on their beloved Lord, and the more thankful and fruitful prizing the presence of God the more highly ever after.

5. We ought to prove our selves in the time of affliction. So says the Prophet, *Lam. 3. 39, 40. Wherefore doth a living man complain a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways and turn unto the Lord our God.* Conscience is many times awakened by affliction; we should not hinder it from being busie and prying, but hearken to it whatever it speaks to us. *Josephs* Brethren made light of their cruelty towards their Brother for many years together. But when they were in distress in *Egypt*, then they lookt into themselves, and

they had a smart and stinging sence of their own unmercifulness ; and they cry out, *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother.* Affliction should cause us to consider our ways, and though sins were palliated and excused before, yet then we should acknowledge, *we are verily guilty.* When our sin hath found us out, we should find *that* out : and our Souls should be humbled within us, and turn to him that smites us.

6. We ought to prove our selves *after our engaging in Ordinances.* 'Tis good to examine before, what we want ; and after, what we have gained. Ordinances are Talents and a vast improvement may be made of them, if we are not wanting to our own interest. Merchants that drive a Trade beyond the Seas when the Ships return, they are careful to examine, what is the produce of the ventures they send. So should we in this Spiritual Trade, we should ask ourselves, what we have gained ? And what is the produce of all our praying, hearing, fasting, praising ? Whether we are such wise Merchants as to gain the Pearl of price ? Whether we thrive in grace, and grow rich in faith, rich in good works, for this is to grow rich towards God ? And truly all the Silver and Gold that ever was created is but dross in comparison of these riches. To

To go to Ordinances and from them, as the Door turns upon the Hinges, and to remain just as we were: will turn to no account, nay to an ill account. We are not to rest therefore *in opere operato*, the work done; but examine what light, what heat, what strength, what grace, what peace we gain by attending upon God: or else we may live and dye like lukewarm and mistaken Laodicea: who said she was rich and increased with Goods, and had need of nothing: and knew not that she was wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, Rev. 3. 17.

7. 'Tis not amiss if there be some Self-proving every day; that keeping of the heart with all diligence, Prov. 4. 23. implies a daily watching and calling it to an account; and that pondering the path of our feet required, vers. 26. implies both wariness before, and a tracing our Steps afterwards to see whether they have been right or wrong, step towards God or from him. Pythagoras an Heathen, advises, every night to ask our selves such Questions as these;

Πῇ ἡμῶν ἡ ἁμαρτία; τί δ' ἔπραξα, τί μοι, τίον καὶ ἐπελάδῃ;
Ἀρετῶν ὧ δ' ἐπὶ πρῶτῳ ἐπὶ ἐξῆς καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα,
Αἰνὰ μὲν ἐκπρήξας ἐπὶ πλῆθει, χρῆσθαι δὲ τῷ περ.

Where have I sinn'd? What have I done?

What duty have I let alone?

Thus bad and good deeds every night,

Will be thy chiding or delight.

F 3 In

In the seventh place, I come to the Arguments, perswading all to this examination and proving of themselves.

1. *Satan is very subtle*, he does endeavour to conceal and hide both Sin and Grace ; Sin in the wicked that they may not perceive the evil nature and tendency of it, till it has actually and utterly ruin'd them ; and Grace in them that do believe, that their hearts may be tormented with doubts and fears, and straitned in thanksgiving unto God. Satan is a lying Spirit, and upholds his Kingdom by deceit and falshood ; His work is to fill Gods Children with false fears, and his own with false hopes : and he has many wiles and stratagems to do both ; 'Tis good therefore to be aware of him, and to be the stricter in searching of our selves that he may not impose upon us nor make us call evil good and good evil. Let us take great heed, for Satan is the *Accuser of the Brethren*, Rev. 12. 10. and will accuse them to themselves as well as accuse them before God : he will transform a true Saint and make him look in his own apprehension like a meer reprobate. And as he is the Accuser of the Brethren, so he is the *Excuser of the wicked*, and makes them say they shall have peace till the anger of the Lord and his jealousie smokes against them,

them, and eternal Vengeance overtakes them.

2. *The heart is deceitful above all things,* Jer. 17. 9. as it is unknown to others, so it hides it self from the view of the man himself: Need there is then of Self-examination. The heart of man will represent Sin as profitable, as pleasant, as creditable and in fashion, and that there is no such danger in the commission of it, but that 'tis time enough hereafter, and easie enough to repent and obtain a pardon. The heart will extenuate sin after 'tis done, and take notice of the mercy of the Lord, but shut its eyes against his justice and holiness; 'twill call any thing almost by the name of saving-grace, and from very weak and insufficient premisses, conclude the State is safe; Such cheats therefore must be more narrowly eyed, and we must bring them to the Heart-searcher that they may be discovered.

3. *There is no Grace but has its counterfeit;* When abundance of Brass and bad Money is abroad, there is the greater care to try before we take. There is a world of counterfeit Grace at this day. Many take *themselves to be something when they are nothing, and so deceive themselves: every one therefore*

F 4

should

should prove his own work, that he may have rejoycing in himself alone and not in another, Gal. 6. 3. 4. that is, that he may have not only the good word of others, but the joyfull approbation of his own Conscience, that his work is good and wrought in God. There is a *precious faith* that ends in the *salvation of the Soul*, and there is a counterfeit faith, that dures only for a while, and in time of temptation fails. There is a saving knowledge, which is *life eternal*; and there is a notional knowledge, which only puffs up him that has it, and makes sorrow and stripes at last to be the more. There is a sincere love to Christ that has a vehement flame which many Waters cannot quench, which no Floods can drown: and there is a love which is only a painted Fire; a love in word and shew and not in heart and deed and truth. There is a Zeal which God is mightily pleased with, as that Zeal in *Phineas*: and there is a Zeal not according to knowledge. There is a true Humility, which makes us like to Christ and gives the Soul rest; and there is a shew of *Wisdom and Humility* to be found even in the Synagogues of Satan and Antichrist. All grace therefore, whether in pretence or true, must be tried by the Word, which if rightly applied, is infallible in its decision.

4. Many do actually go out of the World mistaken in themselves, surely then we should be serious in Self-trial. The foolish Virgins because their Lamps were burning and neatly trimm'd, that is, they profess'd and talkt high, and made a glistering shew: came with full expectation of admission into the Kingdom. Therefore with confidence they knock and with confidence they speak; *Lord, Lord, open unto us*, Mat. 25. 11. But the answer is, *I know you not*; The Door contrary to their expectation is shut for ever against them, and they are sentenc'd to burn too in Hell: though their Lamps on Earth did burn and blaze in a glorious profession of Religion. Some are brought in pleading with the Lord Jesus, when He says, *He knew them not*; *We have eat and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our Streets*, Luk. 13. 26. As if they should say, *Lord! 'tis very strange thou shouldst not know us, None more flock'd after thee than we did: none were more forward to hear thy Word; we were Guests at thy Table many a time; and yet dost thou not know us?* Hear their pleas, see their confidence of being let in: and yet behold them thrust out unto Eternity.

5. Hypocrites may go very far and yet remain

main but Hypocrites and miscarry; Therefore we should examine and see that we go farther. An Hypocrite may have a name that he is alive: he may bend his Knee and lift up his Eye, and speak as it were with the tongue of an Angel: he may pray and prophesie so as to gain mans approbation; but yet that which is *highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God*, Luk. 16. 15. How far did the Apostle Paul go before his Conversion, he was of the straitest Sect, and touching the righteousness of the Law blameless: and yet though his life was without blame, his heart was without grace. Hypocrites how far soever they go, do either allow themselves in sin, or place a confidence in their own righteousness. If we would therefore go beyond them, we must grieve for all sin and hate it; *We must worship God in the Spirit and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the Flesh*, Phil. 3. 3.

6. To be unwilling to Try and Prove our selves is a very bad symptom. The decay'd Tradesman cares not to be at home for fear of being dunn'd by his Creditors; neither does he like to look into his Books because he suspects that he owes more than he is worth: So unsound Professors like not to dwell with themselves for fear Conscience should fill their
Ears

Ears with a dreadful sound; and reproach them with their offences; and they are loath to study the volume of their own hearts because they suspect they shall find little but what is stark-naught there. Sin is a work of darkness where the light is fear'd and shun'd, 'tis a sign that sin bears sway, and where it reigns it will ruine. *Joh. 3. 19. This is the condemnation that light is come into the World, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.*

7. Though it be very bad with us, yet 'tis really good to know the very worst of our selves. Hardness of heart and unsensibleness of sin is a very great plague, the infliction of which argues God to be very angry: but conviction of sin is the work of Gods Spirit. *When the Comforter is come he shall convince the World of Sin, Joh. 16. 8.* Indeed if a bad condition were unchangeable, and there were no difference between an unregenerate Sinner and an Apostate Angel, 'twere another matter. But the truth is, though our state and hearts are both bad, yet both may be alter'd for the better. And if we are sensible that we are under the power of darkness, we shall be the more importunate that God would deliver us, *and translate us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.* If we perceive that our hearts

hearts are old and evil, 'twill make us to cry with more fervency, that the Lord would give us the new heart and the new spirit promised in his new Covenant.

8. There may be great *disconsolateness* where there is truth of grace, if it be unknown. The children of light may walk in darkness; the heirs of salvation may complain, as if they were near lost: and the friends and favourites of Heaven, may think and speak as if God accounted them his Enemies. Hark unto *Heman*: Psal. 88. 7. *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.* And *vars.* 15. 16. *Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, and while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.* Believers being made alive, are also endued with Spiritual Sence, and cannot be indifferent as to Gods love and hatred as others are; If they have not some assurance of the one, they cannot but have some dread of the other: they should therefore prove themselves, that they may know the love that God has to them, and that they may joy in God through Jesus Christ, by whom they have received the atonement, Rom. 5. 11.

9. There is a *day of Trial and Judgment* appointed, and very near at hand. God has appointed

appointed a day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, Act. 17. 31. and truly the Judge standeth before the Door, Jam. 5. 9. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. And if we cannot abide the Trial of our own Consciences now, how shall we abide the Trial of him who is greater than our Consciences and knoweth all things? It concerns us to call our selves to a severe account, and believe in Jesus that we may be justified, and then at that day we shall not be condemned. Let us watch and work, that our Lord when he comes, may find us so doing. Let us store up Scripture evidences that we are his Children, and then we shall have boldness in the day of Judgment, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. Gods Judgment hereafter will be according to truth: names and shews how insignificant will they be at the great day. Therefore let us look to it, that our graces be true, that as such they may be found and own'd at last.

10. A well grounded assurance is possible to be obtained. Let us never give over Trying our selves till we have it. We are commanded to give all diligence to make our calling, and by our calling, our Election sure; 2 Pet. 1. 10. We must not cast away our confidence,

fidence, when once we have gotten it, but hold the beginning of it firm unto the end. Assurance of the love of God, of what value is it? What a relish does it give to every Mercy! What sweetness does it put into the bitterest Cup of Affliction! How undaunted does it make us at the approach of the last Enemy! And with what courage and confidence to commend our departing Souls into the hands of him that has redeemed them.

Before I come to the Application, I am to resolve several *Cases of Conscience* concerning the Subject I am upon. Now the Cases will be of two sorts, some relate to *Sin and a State of Nature*; and others relate unto a *State of Grace*.

I begin with those Cases relating to Sin and a State of Nature.

Case 1. And the first is this; *Is it not better for Sinners to continue ignorant of themselves than by an over-strict search to fill their souls with trouble and horror? Is it not a wiser part to keep themselves quiet while they are so, than to raise a storm and tempest that may not be laid in haste? Now they*
receive

receive their good things, now they receive their consolations; now they can take their ease, eat, drink and be merry: they can feast and laugh and sing, and time runs very swift being spent in carnal jollity. Why then should they look into the state of their Souls, and put an end to all their peace and joy and comfort?

Ans. 1. Sinners ignorance of themselves and the wretched condition they are in, does but add to their misery: Secure indeed they are in a sence, but farther off from safety. It was the misery of Ephraim, that Strangers had devoured his strength and gray hairs were here and there upon him, and yet he knew it not, Hoi. 7. 9. Self-ignorance and carnal security makes the hearts of the Sons of Men fully set in them to do evil, and causes their state to be nearer a kin to desperate. Such will fearlessly add Sin to Sin, and draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and treasure up more and more wrath unto themselves against the day of wrath.

2. *Their peace and joy can be but short at longest. Pleasures for evermore can be found alone in Gods presence: The pleasures of sin and sense are but for a season. Job. 20. 4, 8. Knowest thou not this of old, since man was*

was placed upon Earth, that the triumphing of the Wicked is short, and the joy of the Hypocrite but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his head reacheth to the Clouds; yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung; they which have seen him, shall say, Where is he? He shall fly away as a dream and shall not be found; yea, he shall be chased away as a night vision.

3. Better their false peace which must quickly end, should be disturbed by Self-trial, than that it should cease by their Trial at Gods Bar. The ungodly cannot carry a false peace along with them into another World. The rich man in the Gospel that fared sumptuously every day, carried none of his good things with him when he died: his pleasure then came to a full stop; and we read of nothing he met with but evil things, torments, flames, endless and unquenchable, Luk. 16. and then the rich man saw, it had been better before to have broken off his sinful pleasure by Self-reflection and Repentance.

4. Though a false peace upon Self-examination be banished, yet there may a true peace be obtained in the room of it. Be not unwilling

ling to look into your selves, though you find matter of sorrow; for godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation; They that *sow in tears shall reap in joy*, Psal. 126. 5. And Christ pronounces the mourners blessed for they shall be comforted, Mat. 5. 4.

Case 2. The second Case is this; *Is it not time enough hereafter for Sinners to search and look into themselves?* Then when prosperity and youth are gone, and affliction and old age are come? What necessity is there to put themselves upon the rack presently?

Ans. i. The longer they defer, the more afraid they will be to begin, and so it may never be done in this World: especially considering, that delay will make the work more difficult and grievous. The larger the scores are, the more loath they will be to look them over; and the more peccant and wicked the heart has been, the more unwilling it will be to be called to account: therefore 'tis best to begin this very instant, and 'twould have been better to have begun before.

2. Sin is so great an evil that none can be too soon convinced of it, nor too soon converted

verted from it : as on the other hand, Grace is so excellent that we can never be too early enriched with it ; and assurance of the love of God so desirable and delightful, that it can never be too soon obtained. Why should there be a delay in the search after Sin ? This Enemy should speedily be inquired after ; since if let alone, it may ruine us suddenly before we are aware.

3. If Sinners refuse to mind the Lord and themselves in the time of youth and prosperity, God may refuse to have any regard to them in the time of their distress. Now is the accepted time, now they may seek the Lord and search themselves to good purpose, but whether the time of affliction may be an accepted time or no, is questionable. The Lord threatens to laugh at the calamity of some and to mock when their fear comes, and that he will not be found of them, Prov. 1. 26, 28. They that refused to hearken, and stopp'd their Ears and made their hearts like an Adamant Stone, see what came to pass at last, great wrath came upon them, they were scattered with a whirlwind ; and as he cried, and they would not hear, so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of Hosts, Zach. 7. 13.

4. Why should such a short lived creature as Man delay to examine himself? What is his life? 'Tis even a vapour that appears for a little time, and then vanisheth away, Jam. 4.

14. How quickly may Death arrest him, and summon him before the Lords Tribunal? Some are well in one hour, sick the next and dead the third; nay, some are well and sick and dead the same hour, if not the same minute. Defer not then to look into thy state and heart speedily, since upon the sudden it may be said to thee. *Render an account of thy Stewardship for thou shalt be no longer Steward*, Luk. 16. 2.

Case 3. The third Case follows, which is this; *How shall Sinners that all their days have been careless of, and utter Strangers to themselves manage this business of Self-examination?*

Ans. 1. Let them get alone; not to be speculatively wanton, or project for the World, or to please themselves with vain and proud and towering imaginations; but that they may seriously bethink themselves what is likely to become of them for ever. Let them get out of the croud and hurry of worldly business, and shake off carnal company

84 *Prove your own selves.*

pany and be at leisure to understand their Souls condition. Certainly a Soul that is of greater value than all the World is worth minding, is worth saving.

2. Let the *thoughts of God and of Eternity make them serious*, especially considering how much God has been provoked, and how near they may be unto Eternity. Time is passing away from them, and Death is making great haste towards them: and immediately after Death, they enter upon Eternal state, and how sad will it be if it be a state of eternal woe.

3. Let them cry unto God for his *Convincing Spirit*. When the Spirit is given, (and truly the Lord is ready to give his Spirit unto all that ask him) he does discover that in Sin that before was not perceived: he makes Hell to become naked, and takes off that covering that was upon destruction; He holds before Sinners the Glass of Gods holy Law, that in that Glass they may behold their hearts and lives; shews unto them that the characters of Gods Enemies agree to them, and that *their spot is not the spot of his Children*, Deut. 32. 5. Then Sin will revive and Sinners die; that is, become sensible they are the sons of death and wrath and in great danger of Eternal ruine.

Now

Now they are to hold up their hands and cry; *Guilty, Guilty*, and to lament and bemoan themselves as *Ephraim* did, to see themselves in such a lost condition.

4. Let them be *very inquisitive what they shall do that they might be saved*. Thus were those *Jews* that were *prickt at the heart*, *Act. 2.* and thus was the *trembling Jaylour*, *Act. 16.* A lost estate being perceived is not to be rested in; none ought to be contented to be damned, but they must inquire what they must do to escape the wrath to come, and they must give themselves to prayer in good earnest, and use the other means of grace: and the sense of their sin and misery should make them the more fervent in crying for that mercy and grace which they so highly stand in need of.

Case 4. The fourth Case is this; *When Sinners upon Self-trial have found out the badness of their State, is there any reason they should despair of mercy?*

Ans. 1. Despair is *one of the greatest sins that can be committed*, dishonouring the grace of God, making light of the blood of Christ, and very opposite to the Spirit of Grace. *It is good*, says the Prophet, *that a man should hope*, *Lam. 3. 26.* Surely, then 'tis bad that a man

should despair. This sin thwarts the very design of the Gospel. And Satan being hopeles himself, would fain hinder sensible Sinners from hoping, though he cherishes vain hopes in such as are presumptuous.

2. There is a *despair that is a Duty*; that is a despair of help from self: and a despair of help from God, if there be a resolution to continue in Sin. Thou mayest as well hope to get no harm by the fall in throwing thy self off from the top of *Londons Monument*. Thou may'st as well cast thy self into the Fire, and hope not to be burnt, as go on still in thy Sins and hope to escape everlasting Flames.

3. But yet the *door of hope is really open to the greatest Sinners*, that are willing to return to God and become Saints. Blaspheinous persecuting *Saul* was let in at this door. And 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11. you read of a sad Crew, that if Hell were to be raked, worse could hardly be found. *Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, effeminate abusers of themselves with Mankind, Thieves, Covetous, Drunkards, Revilers, Extortioners*, and yet these were *washt and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God*. Such instances of the rich and free grace

grace of God, should hinder the worst from despairing when they come to themselves, and are minded to come home to the Lord.

4. That *conviction of sin and misery which sensible Souls have, is the common road to Christ and grace and comfort.* He gives rest to the weary and heavy laden, he gives liberty to the captives, and binds up the broken hearted, Mat. 11. 28. Luk. 4. 18. When Sinners are brought to the brink of Hell in their own apprehension, this is an hopeful sign, they shall be delivered from that place of woe and sorrow, and that they shall not feel what they fear.

Case 5. The fifth Case is this ; *What course must Sinners take after they have prov'd themselves, and found how bad they are, to be brought into a better and safe Estate ?*

Ans. 1. They *must not oppose conviction :* but be willing, nay, earnestly desirous that it may be thorow, that their humiliation may be the deeper ; they must not only be sensible that their actions have been bad, but that their hearts are a great deal worse : that their very nature is corrupted, and their state most miserable. Slight convictions soon wear

wear off, and a little sense of Sin is followed only with such *goodness that is as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away,* Hos. 6. 4. The deeper the humiliation, commonly the stricter the holiness afterwards. *Piscator ictus sapit*, the burnt Child dreads the Fire. And he that hath tasted the Wormwood and the Gall that is in Sin, will be the more alienated from it, and afraid of contracting new guilt and defilement. Let not the pangs of contrition go off too soon, for fear there be an abortive instead of the new birth: the more you are burthen'd with Sin, the more sincere Conversion will be, and Christ is the readier to give you rest.

2. They must consent to cast away every transgression, and cease to be the companions of Transgressors. Let not any Sin be kept, and rolled as a sweet morsel under the Tongue, for 'twill prove as bitter and deadly as the very gall of Asps at last. That promise, *Iniquity shall not be your ruine*, is annexed to a command; *Cast away from you all your transgressions*, Ezek. 18. 30, 31. The wicked man is required to forsake his way, which intimates the reformation of his life, and also to forsake his thoughts: which shews his very heart must be renewed, else there cannot be a returning unto God indeed, nor mercy and pardon

don obtained, Esa. 55. 7. It is reported concerning *Agrippina* the Mother of *Nero Cæsar*, that it was foretold her, That her Son should be Emperor of *Rome*, but afterwards kill his own Mother. She said, *Occidat modo imperet*, I let him kill me so he may but Reign. Oh let not any Sinner say so concerning any gainful, delightful darling Sin. *Let it damn me so it may but Reign. Let me die by it, so I may but live in it.* And as sinful courses must be abandoned, so also sinful company. *Save your selves from an untoward generation*, Act. 2. 40. was the advice of *Peter* to those awakned Souls that askt him, what they should do. If you would turn to God and go to Heaven, you must leave that company that are resolved to go on in Sin, and unto Hell.

3. They must attend upon prophecy and beg that the Spirit would accompany it. The Word of God is the incorruptible seed, of which Sinners are born again, 1 Pet. 1. 23. and the Word is made effectual by the Spirit. 'Tis a very encouraging asseveration of Christ. Joh. 5. 25. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live.* A meer man might have cried long enough and to no purpose at *Lazarus* his grave. But

But when our Lord says, *Lazarus come forth*, there went out a power along with his word that raised him. Let Sinners attend upon the Word of Christ. Christ himself may speak to them, as well as man, and then the Spirit of Life will enter into them; and the dead in sin shall live.

4. They must look unto Jesus for righteousness and strength, Esa. 45. 24. The righteousness of Christ is necessary unto Sinners reconciliation, therefore God does not impute their own sins to them upon their believing in Christ, because he does impute the righteousness of his Son: That's a notable place, Rom. 4. 6. *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works.* Here is an imputed righteousness, and lest any should think it a putative or imaginary righteousness, 'tis called a righteousness of the Lords own imputing: Further, 'tis a righteousness that does not consist in any works or obedience of ours. Finally, this Doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ is asserted by David under the Old Testament, as well as by Paul under the New. In Sinners Approach unto God, this righteousness is to be relied on for pardon and justification. And as his Righteousness is necessary unto Reconciliation, so

is his strength and the power of his Spirit unto Conversion. None will be made free from the power of Sin and Satan, none will be delivered from the power of darkness, till the Son of God does make them free indeed, and translate them into his own Kingdom.

5. They must cry unto God to be thoroughly turned: So did Ephraim, Jer. 31. 18. *Turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God.* Ephraim had the seal of the Covenant administred to him in infancy, which was Circumcision; and therefore he calls the Lord *his* God, and has the greater encouragement to cry to him to circumcise and turn his heart unto himself. And surely under the New Testament the Covenant is not made more narrow, nor our arguments and encouragements fewer to plead for converting grace. Let Sinners therefore beg, that as they have been baptized with Water in the Lords name, so they may be justified by the blood of Christ, sanctified by his Spirit, and effectually turned unto God. Till the Lord does turn you, you must needs remain unconverted. And when once you are made earnest that you may be sincere Converts, you are earnest for that which is most agreeable to the will of God, and 'tis a sign that the work is already begun. There could never be strong desires to be turned, if the heart were not in some degree turned to desire it.

Case 6.

Case 6. The sixth Case is this; *How far may Sinners go and yet fall short of Grace and Heaven?* This is of great concernment to be fully resolved, that we may not be mistaken in ourselves, therefore I shall be the larger upon it. Many with *Agrippa* are almost persuaded to be Christians, that are not Christians altogether; Many with him in the Gospel are not far from the Kingdom of Heaven, who yet never come thither: the case of such is sad, for they are miserable after they were near to happiness: they are like a Merchant that is Shipwrackt, and loses all, and himself too, within sight of shore: they sail as it were by Heaven to Hell, and their being once so near Heaven, will make Hell the more doleful and intolerable. Now how far Sinners may go, and yet still remain but in a State of Nature, I shall shew in these particulars.

1. They that have no true grace may own and acknowledge the Christian Faith to be true. 'Tis affirmed of *Simon Magus*, that he believed, *Act. 8. 13.* The miracles that were wrought by *Philip* for the confirmation of the Gospel gained his assent, that it was the Gospel of God and of undoubted truth. In like manner *Nicodemus* while a Stranger to Regeneration was convinced, and did confess that Christ was a Teacher sent from God, *Joh. 3. 1, 2.* Now as I go along

along, I shall shew wherein such as have no grace do fail, that the unsound may be convinced of their hypocrisie, and the truly gracious may be the better able to discern their sincerity. Though the forementioned persons believe the truth of the Gospel, they do not apply it to themselves, nor heartily embrace the goodness of the Gospel, but prefer their lusts, their pleasures and their profits, before Gods Kingdom; their assent is weak and does not influence their Consciences affections and conversations, and so proves ineffectual to Salvation. *Jam. 2. 14. What doth it profit if a man say he hath Faith and have not Works? Can Faith save him? And v. 26. As the Body without the Spirit is dead, so Faith without Works is dead also.*

2. They that have no grace may solemnly be admitted into the visible Church: Simon the Sorcerer was baptized, and yet Peter tells him afterwards, that he was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, *Act. 8. 13, 23.* Multitudes of the Jews of old were circumcised in their flesh, whose hearts were never circumcised. *Jer. 9. 25, 26. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them that are circumcised with the uncircumcised; Egypt and Judah and Edom, and the Children of Ammon, and Moab: for all these Nations are uncircumcised: and all the House of Israel are uncircum-*

circumcised in their hearts. How many by Baptism are admitted into the Church of Christ, and rest herein, not caring to partake of the Blood of Christ, and least of all to partake of the Spirit of Grace and Holiness which are signified by the Water in that institution. What did it profit the *Jews* that they were circumcised in their flesh, if after they did not answer their infant Circumcision, by a circumcised ear and heart, and an holy and obedient Conversation? And in like manner, what will the being baptized with Water avail, if the filthiness of Sin be not purged, but loved, and there be not *an answer afterwards of a good Conscience towards God?* 1 Pet. 3. 21.

3. They that have no true grace, *may be forward in profession*: and by talking at an high rate, attain unto some reputation for Godliness; thus *Sardis had a name and fame that she liv'd, and yet was dead,* Rev. 3. 1. But these forward Professors when unsound, drive on some carnal design, as the ravenous Birds when they soar never so much aloft, have their eyes downward, and are looking after something that they may prey upon. Under all their profession, their hearts they neglect, and suffer them to be full of pride and passion and love of the World: they have no desire after inward purity, and besides they wilfully

fully and wofully fail many times in their dealings with men, and in regard of those duties which in their capacities and relations are incumbent upon them.

4. They that have no true grace, *may engage in all the publick Ordinances that Christ has instituted*: they may pray and hear, and be admitted unto Communion and Church-fellowship, and yet not be the real Members of Christ, and be shut out of the Kingdom. Those persons had eat and drank in our Lords presence, and had heard him teaching many a time, unto whom he speaks after this terrible manner. *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of Heaven, and you your selves thrust out*, Luk. 13. 26, 28. These hypocritical engagers in Ordinances, seek not the Lord himself in his Ordinances; His favour, and the communications of his sanctifying Spirit they prize not, they desire not: and though Ordinances leave them as proud, and wanton, and unbelieving, and earthly-minded, as they found them; they are unconcerned; for to have better hearts than they had, is not any piece of their design.

5. They

5. They that have no true grace, may attain to a great measure of notional knowledge. That Servant who was beaten with many stripes did know the will of his Master, Luk. 12. 47. We all have knowledge, says the Apostle, 1 Cor. 8. 1. unsound as well as sincere. An Hypocrite may have great light in his understanding, but that light makes him high-minded, his knowledge is without affection to Spiritual things, his head is very clear, but his heart is very cold. He is acquainted with the truth, but he holds it in unrighteousness. Is it not a sad sight to see Children that have the Rickets, with great Heads, but Arms weak and unable to do any thing, and Legs small and feeble and unable to go? Here is the Emblem of one that knows the Word of God, but neither loves nor obeys it. A great head he has, but his actions and steps bear no proportion to the knowledge he has received.

6. They that have no true grace, may attain unto excellent gifts. Judas and Demas were both Preachers of the Gospel, and called upon others to turn to God, and yet were not real Converts themselves. Our Lord tells us, that many will say to him in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And yet they shall be bid to depart from him, Mat. 7. 22, 23.

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Many Ministers miscarry. Many fall into Hell from under the Pulpit, and out of the Pulpit; they are able to preach to others, and yet themselves are castaways. These unsound ones aim at their own applause in the exercise of their gifts, they hunt after honour, they prefer gifts before grace, and many times use their gifts amiss, to divide and destroy, and not to edifie the Church of Christ.

7. They that have no true grace, may have their Consciences exceedingly awakened, and may be filled with the terrors of the Lord because of Sin. *Pashur* had the name of *Mager-missabib* because of those terrors wherewith he was surrounded. Oh what an agony was *Judas* in when he saw that Christ was indeed condemned: and under these terrors there may be a confession of Sin; *I have sinned*, says *Judas*, in that *I have betrayed innocent blood*. *I have sinned against the Lord and against you*, says *Pharaoh* to *Moses*. But 'tis to be observed, concerning them that are unsound, that their troubles do either drive them to carnal means to remove them, or to desperate courses: or if they do seek unto God, 'tis but for a while, and they are glad when their trouble is gone, that they may sin with greater freedom. *When he slew them, then they sought him, they returned and enquired*

early after God, but yet their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant, Psal. 98. 34- 38.

8. They that have no true grace, may have some inclination towards, and wishes after grace and holiness. Agrippa his heart was somewhat inclin'd towards Christianity. The young man in the Gospel had done something, and was inclined to do more good that he might inherit Eternal Life, Mat. 19. 16. But these wishes as they are weak and inconstant, so they are inconsiderate. When they hear that holiness is necessary to happiness, they say, *Oh that we might be holy!* But when they understand, that holiness is to hate every pleasing and gainful sin to keep unspotted from the World, and to yield up their whole man unto God that he may dwell and rule in them, and command all, and make what use he pleases of them in his service to his glory, then their ignorant, and lazy wishes to be holy, cool and vanish. They are not for present and through Sanctification: If they could have grace upon a Death-Bed, just sufficient to keep them out of Hell, they look upon that as the best time of having it: which shews they are of *Balaams* mind, and that they desire not to live the life, but only to die the death of the Righteous.

9. They that have no true grace, may resolve upon a reformation, nay, actually reform in many things. The Israelites of old, when terrified by the voice of the Lord out of the midst of the Fire, they speak thus to Moses, *Deut. 5. 27. Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it and do it.* Here was a good resolution, but when the Lord adds *v. 29. Oh that there were an heart in them to fear me and keep all my Commandments always, that it might be well with them forever!* It shews how unlikely 'twas to be kept. Such resolutions are made in distress and fear, to stop the mouth of a clamorous Conscience, and in their own strength; and when the distress is over, they break them as quickly and easily as *Sampsons* bands were snapt asunder. And suppose there be an actual reformation, as in *Herod* who heard *John*, and observed him, and *did many things*, *Mar. 6. 20.* Yet the obedience is but partial, there is not a following the Lord and his Word fully. *Herod* forsook several of his iniquities, but his incestuous love to *Herodias* his Brother *Philip's* Wife, he could not endure to be told of, rather than pluck out this right eye, he cuts off the Head of the Baptist, who told him 'twas unlawful for him to have her.

10. They that have no true grace, *may not only lead an unblameable life, but may suffer much upon the account of Religion.* The lives of the Pharisees were free from scandalous and notorious Crimes, and yet their righteousness was insufficient, according to our Lords sentence. Nay, as external active obedience may be yielded, by them that are graceless in heart, so some passive obedience also. Judas was one of those twelve that forsook all and followed Christ, but 'tis likely 'twas in hope of a greater gain, for he kept the Bag and bare what was put therein: and probably thought he should be a great man in the Kingdom of Messiah, which he deemed a Temporal Kingdom. Unsound ones are acted by vain glory in their sufferings, not influenced by love to Christ and Truth; And though *they give their Bodies to be burned*, and have not this love, what does it profit them? 1 Cor. 13. 3. Some may undergo much, but 'tis to promote a Party not Christianity, and though very stiff and stubborn in their sufferings, yet much of the express Word of God they cast behind their backs.

11. They that have no true grace, *may yet be very zealous in defending the Truths of the Gospel.* I grant Conversion to an Opinion is many times taken and mistaken for Conversion

version unto God, though that Opinion is erroneous; and such Zealots for erroneous Opinions, care to talk of nothing else hardly: the most warm and spiritual discourses are not savoury to them, they are apt to judge all that are not of their way, though never so holy: but connive at Sin in those that side with them, and while their heads are busie about their Opinions, their spirits, hearts and lives are not lookt after. But I go farther, and affirm, that Graceless ones may espouse the quarrel of Truth and stand up for the defence of the Gospel. The Apostle tells us of some that did preach Christ *not sincerely, not of good will, but even of envy and strife*; yet he *rejoyced that Christ was preached*, and the truth of the Gospel published and maintained, *Phil. 1. 15, 16, 18*. Many may speak for that which is really truth, and defend Tenents that are sound and Orthodox; but these Opinions are entertained only as Opinions, they float in their heads but sink not down into their hearts, neither do they care practically to improve them to the bettering of their actions.

12. They who have no true grace, may *arise so high as to have some kind of joy*: This joy was in the hearers compared *unto the stony ground*, *Mat. 13. 20*. *Ezekiels hearers flockt*

to him with rejoycing because of his most pleasant utterance, and taking gifts where with God had enriched him : and 'tis very likely that their attendance upon the Prophets Ministry did yield some quiet to their Consciences which else would have been very troublesome, if the Ordinances of God had been wholly neglected. Besides, the great and glorious things of the Gospel, may cause some kind of joy at the hearing of them, as other glad tidings do affect us, especially of some good that is possible to be obtained. When the love of God in Christ is set forth, his abundant Grace, the sureness of his Covenant, and the glorious and eternal rest which remains for his People, the Hearers that are not savingly wrought on, may have some little taste of the good Word of God, and of the powers of the World to come, as well as be made partakers of the common gifts of the Holy Ghost : And all this may cause some kind of joy. But their joy is without precedent sorrow for Sin ; and though the interest of the Flesh and World prevails, yet this joy remains : the truth is, it has no solid foundation, no sanctifying effect, and will last but for a moment.

To conclude this, since the confines of unregeneracy extend so far, since there may be
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so much, where there is not saving grace. Oh pray that you may not rest here: Be unsatisfied in the proving of your selves, till you find that you outstrip all the Hypocrites that ever were. 'Tis necessary to exceed them; 'tis not enough to equal them; but Oh how sad will it be to fall short of those who fall short of the Heavenly Kingdom!

In the second place, I proceed unto those Cases that relate unto a State of Grace, the resolution of which will be very helpful in the examination and proving of your selves.

Case 1. The first Case is this; *How shall we know when we are savingly Enlightned?* Those that are saved are made light in the Lord, the eyes of their understandings are enlightened by the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, and yet there is an illumination which Hypocrites have; How then shall saving illumination be distinguished?

2. 1. Where saving illumination is, the light is marvellous, 1 Pet. 2. 9. *That ye should shew forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into marvellous light.* When God by a word of power says, *Let there be light* in a dark mind, that light makes a marvellous discovery, and the Soul is fill'd with

wonder, for what was concealed is now manifested; and indeed the Apostle says, *Whatsoever does make manifest is light*, Eph. 5. 13. He that is enlightned sees his danger, and marvels, that before he should be so fearless and secure. He sees the vanity and emptiness of the Creature, and marvels, that he should so idolize and dote upon it. He sees the finfulness of sin, and marvels, that he should be so eager to serve it, and love that which is so abominable and hateful. He sees the Lords al-fufficiency, and marvels, that he could live so long without Christ and without God in the World, and for so doing, calls *himself foolish and ignorant, and a beast before him*. And that the scales should at last be made to fall off from his eyes, that he might know the things of his peace, this is marvellous kindness and grace indeed.

li 2. Saving illumination *humbles*. Job says, *Mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor my self and repent in dust and ashes*, Job. 42. 5, 6. To know and be proud, is not to know as we ought to know. He that understands God and himself aright will have high thoughts of God, but he will be low in his own eyes. If we are acquainted with the glorious holiness and spotless purity of the Lord, we shall be abased because of our own pollutions,

pollutions, the discovery of his perfections will humble us because of our infirmities. *David* upon this discovery crys out; he is a worm, and *Abraham*, that he is but dust, and *Job*, behold I am vile what shall I answer thee.

3. Saving illumination determines the heart, and prevails with it to come to *Jesus Christ*. *Joh. 6. 45.* It is written in the Prophets, and they shall be all taught of God, every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me. When God does shine into the hearts of any, he gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of *Jesus Christ*, 2 *Cor. 4. 6.* Christ is the Image of the invisible God, and most of God is to be seen in Christ, here is the most glorious display of his abundant Wisdom, Justice, Power and Love; hereupon the Lord *Jesus* cannot but be lookt upon as desirable, and all things are accounted dung and loss that he may be gained.

4. Saving illumination removes prejudices. As soon as ever the Psalmist came into the Sanctuary, and understood the different ends of the righteous and the wicked, his envy at the ungodly their prosperity, and his prejudices against purity and innocency, as if it were in vain, ceased, *Psal. 73.* The carnal mind

mind disputes as it thinks with strong reasons before, against Religion, but when the Word makes any truly wise, presently, presently these imaginations are cast down, and the high thoughts against the knowledge of God are brought into captivity, 2 Cor. 10. 5. The Lord of Rochester that was a great Disputer against God and Christ and Godliness, when once enlightened, he made this notable acknowledgment; *That all the seeming contradictions and absurdities of the Word of God, fancied by men of corrupt minds and judgments were now vanished, and the excellency and beauty of it appeared to him, being come to receive the truth in the love of it.* Then also he cryed out, *That that absurd and foolish Philosophy which was so much admired by some, and propagated by Hobs, had undone him, and many more of the best Parts, in the Nation.*

5. Saving illumination does not rest in speculation, but effectually urges unto practical godliness. They who know the truth as it is in Jesus, do put off concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; They that are renewed in the spirit of their mind, do put on that new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. 4. 21-24. When the grace of God does bring Salvation,

it teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World, Tit. 2. 11, 12. And indeed, if rightly instructed we shall obey with a willing mind; for we shall see plainly, that Sin is the worst, that God is the best Master: that Christs Yoke is easie, his ways pleasantness, his paths peace, and at the end there is glory and immortality.

6. Where there is Saving illumination, there will be a following on to know the Lord, and a desire to be enlightned further, and an application unto God himself to be the Teacher. Ministers and means are to be made use of, but we must look beyond both to Heaven, to the Father of Lights and Mercies. David often prays to have his eyes more fully opened, and to be taught to better purpose, Psal. 119. Moses cries out, Teach us so to number our days that we may apply our hearts to Wisdom, Psal. 90. 12. Who knows not that mans days are few? And yet this ordinary lesson, God must teach, else none will learn it right, so as to be indeed the wiser, and all have need to learn this lesson more perfectly. The truly enlightned long to be enlightned more, because wisdom is to principal a thing. Psal. 119. 130. The entrance of thy Words giveth light, it giveth understanding

to the simple, and then presently it follows, *vers. 131. I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for thy Commandments.*

Case 2. The second Case is this; *When may Humiliation be said to be true?* As humiliation in Christ went before his exaltation, so must his followers first be humbled in the sight of the Lord, and he has promised to lift them up. Now thus true humiliation may be known.

1. Humiliation implies a conviction of Sin. The humbled Soul sees his Sin, and feels it, feels the heinousness, feels the weight of it. Those humbled ones, *Esa. 59. 12. speak thus, Our transgressions are multiplied before, and our iniquities testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities we know them.* They know their iniquities too well to make light of them, they do indeed know and see that 'tis an evil thing and a bitter that they have sinn'd against the Lord, and were once void of his fear, *Jer. 2. 19. Being afflicted, mourning, weeping, turning our laughter to mourning, our joy to heaviness;* the Apostle makes to be humbling of our selves, *Jam. 4. 9, 10.*

2. True Humiliation implies, Shame and Self-aborrancy. Unhumbled Israel are charged with the want of this. *Jer. 8. 12. Were they ashamed*

ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall, in the time that I visit, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord. But humbled ones are made to remember their evil ways and their doings that have not been good, so as to loath themselves for their iniquities, Ezek. 36. 31. They see ground for shame and blushing, considering the great guilt that lies upon them, the odious and filthy spots and stains, that Sin has left upon their Souls: together with the monstrous ingratitude wherewith they are chargeable. All their transgressions have struck at that God who gave them their Being, keeps them alive, and out of Hell, and they have not one mercy or comfort but is of his giving. And this God is al-seeing, knows the secretest abominations, is acquainted even with all their heart-impurity: no wonder therefore that they are ashamed, and lie down and are covered with confusion, Jer. 3. 25.

3. True humiliation implies, a taking shame to our selves by confession of Sin, and as we take shame to our selves, so hereby we give glory unto God. David did thus; Ps. 51. 3. I acknowledge my iniquity and my sin is ever before me. An humbled Sinner, *Est fidelis Dei Orator contra seipsum*, brings in black Bills of Indictment against

against himself, and in his Confession lays open all, especially the worst of all: conceals nothing that is evil out of any regard thereto, or unwillingness to forsake it. And as *covering of Sin shall not prosper*, so they that thus *confess and forsake Sin shall have mercy*, Prov. 28. 13. Confession is by One called *Vomit* *Spiritualis*, a Spiritual Vomiting; they that are indeed humbled, make conscience of abstaining from the iniquities they have acknowledged: they dare not *return with the Dog to his own vomit again, and with the Swine that is washed to her wallowing in the Mire*, 2 Pet. 2. ult.

4. True humiliation implies, *Self-diffidence*. Humbled ones, 'tis very apparent to them that they have no reason at all to place any confidence in themselves: they see that their own wisdom is folly, and that true wisdom is from above; they see that *their own righteousness is as filthy rags*, Esa. 64. 6. Therefore they rely not upon *their own righteousness*, but upon the greatness of Divine mercy. Dan. 9. 18. They are sensible also that their own strength is weakness, and hereupon that promise belongs to them. Esa. 40. 29. *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength*. And as the truly humbled Soul dares not trust in it self, so neither does it
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rely upon the creature for help, and though it makes use of the means of grace, yet it looks beyond them, trusts not, rests not in them, but is sensible that Ordinances themselves without the Merit and Spirit of Christ, are nothing. The Spirit of Christ must make them profitable, and the Merit of Christ must make the engaging in them acceptable.

5. True Humiliation implies, a *submission unto God*: This is required, *Jam. 4. 6, 7. He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit your selves therefore unto God.* God is taken by humbled Sinners for a Lord, his Will is taken for a Law. Other Lords have had the dominion over them, but now they are willing to make mention of Gods name, and own his Authority, *Esa. 26. 13. They are unwilling that any Sin should have the dominion. Psal. 119. 133. Order my steps in thy Word, and let not any iniquity have the dominion over me.* The Throne of Sin is in the Heart, and the strength of Sin lies in the love of it. They desire that their very hearts may be cleansed and that God may dwell and rule there, and their love to Sin, is turned into hatred. And as they submit to the Will and Law of God, so they are patient and humble under his mighty hand. They do not condemn the Lord for afflicting, but themselves for

for deserving to be afflicted. How submissive is the Church, though Gods anger and hand pressed her sore. *Mic. 7. 9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him.*

6. True Humiliation implies, a sense of unworthiness of the least, especially of any saving grace and mercy. The humbled prodigal when he came home to his Fathers house, what low thoughts he had, you may perceive by the words he is resolved to speak. *Luk. 15. 18, 19. Father I have sinn'd against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son, make me as one of thy hired Servants;* As if he had said, *Father I have not behaved my self like a Son, neither do I expect to be dealt with as a Son, 'twill be great favour to be received as a Servant, who deserve to be punished and excluded as an Enemy.* Humbled Sinners do very much consider their ill deserts, and how are they filled with admiration at the free grace of God in his Son Jesus, which is the ground of their hope and encouragement. By the grace of God they are, what they are; they have, what they have; they hope, what they hope for.

Case 3. The third Case follows; *How may we be sure that our desires after God and grace*

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are sincere? 'Tis a Maxim in practical Divinity, *That the desires after Grace, are Grace,* but they must be true desires. Now these may thus be known.

1. Sincere desires *spring from knowledge and serious consideration.* The Lord is not *αγνωστος*, an unknown God to them that indeed desire after him: he has caused his goodness which is his glory to pass before them, and the desirableness of that goodness has been perceived. *Jer. 24. 7. I will give them an heart to know me:* and then it follows, *they shall return to me with their whole heart.* The eyes must be anointed with eye-salve, the judgment must be inlightned and informed concerning the Lords perfections, and fulness and riches of grace and mercy, and willingness to communicate of these riches: then desires after him will be real and well-grounded.

2. Sincere desires *are prevailing;* my meaning is, that God and Grace are desired more than any thing in the World, than all the World besides. An Author tells us, that *Tepiditas est parvus amor boni.* Lukewarmness implies some little love to that which is good, but there is a greater love to that which is evil and vain: And what does the little love then signifie? If God be not desired above all, he is not truly at all desired. That was a sin-

cere desire, *Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on Earth that I desire besides thee.* That is, All things comparatively to thee are undesirable in my esteem. In the *Roman State* 'twas said;

*Nec ferre potest Cæsarve priorem,
Pompeiusve parem.*

Cæsar could not endure a superior, and *Pompey* could not brook an equal. God will have neither superior nor equal in our hearts, they that love him truly give him the highest room of all.

3. Sincere desires *bear up against opposition.* Though the *Flesh* does lust, and *Mammon* and *Satan* joyn with it, yet the *Spirit* does lust against it, *Gal. 5. 17.* There is a longing to be deliver'd from the body of *Sin*, to be rid of that evil which is present, when good is about to be done, *Rom. 7.* Where there are desires after *Grace* indeed, the remainders of *Sin* are irksom; and we shall sigh and wish, that the law of the *Spirit of life in Christ Jesus* may make us free from the law of *Sin and Death.*

4. Sincere desires are great enemies to delays. *David's* Soul made haste to God and to do his duty. *Psal. 119. 60. I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments,* and he desires

desires that God would make haste to him. *Psal. 101. 2. I will behave my self wisely in a perfect way, Oh when wilt thou come to me! So Psal. 70. 1. Make haste O God to deliver, make haste to help me O Lord.* And when God did withdraw from him, he cries out, *How long wilt thou forget me O Lord, forever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? Ps. 13. 1.* Every day does seem a year, and every year does seem an age to longing Souls, when the Lord with-holds his quickening and comforting presence from them.

5. Sincere desires are extended to every thing which God propounds in his Word as desirable. Not some onely, but all the benefits of Christ are longed after, all his Offices are prized. Sincere ones see a necessity of Christ a Priest upon the Cross, they love to hear him as a Prophet in the Pulpit, and are very desirous to submit to him as a Prince upon the Throne; Nay, they yield their hearts to be his Throne. The Laws of God are dear to them, they desire to keep them all: to be filled with all the fulness of God: to stand perfect and compleat in all the will of God: Nay, they aspire so high, as to beg that they may do his will on Earth as 'tis done in Heaven, *Mat. 6. 10.*

6. Sincere desires are industrious. Solomon speaks of a desire of the slothful, which kills him because his hands refuse to labour, Prov. 21. 25. He perishes for want of the good desired, because he will not take pains to obtain it. True desires are accompanied with a fear of missing what is desired, not so as to make unbelieving conclusions, but to quicken unto diligence. Psal. 27. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.* Then we desire really, when we seek diligently. And where is diligence and pains better employed, than when seeking the Lord, who has told us as certainly as he is, so certainly he will be a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. 11. 6.

7. Sincere desires are never quite satisfied here in this World. What is said concerning earthly riches,

Crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crescit.

may be applied to the true riches, *Crescit amor, quantum divitiarum*, love to them, and covetousness after more, increases as they increase. He that has most grace is most desirous to have more. 'Tis true indeed, our Lord tells us, Job. 6. 35. *He that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.* But if this be referr'd to Spiritual things, the meaning is, he shall not so hunger and thirst

as to despair and be tormented with despair of satisfaction, or else the passage may be referred to the things of this World, that *impia fames*, that sinful and eager hunger and thirst after them shall cease. Sincere Souls never can in this World, and they think they never can, prize their Lord Jesus, love and fear, and serve their God sufficiently, and therefore desire still to do all this more and better : they forget the things behind, and are still reaching forward, and if you ask when they will be satisfied, *David* shall answer, *Psal. 17. ult.* and what he speaks of himself is applicable to others ; *As for me I shall behold thy face in righteousness, and be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.*

Case 4. A fourth Case may be this ; *How may we be able to discern, whether in Religion we are acted meerly by slavish fear, yea or no ?* Though carnal security is that which ruins the most of men, yet a slavish fear is to be found also in the ungodly. Such a fear there was in those we read of, *Psal. 78. 34.* When the hand of the Lord was stretched out, and slew many of them, the rest feared, and sought him : and yet the hearts of these who thus out of slavish fear sought the Lord were not right with him. This kind of fear invades the Sinners and Hypocrites. *Esa. 33. 14.*

The Sinners in Sion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprized the Hypocrites, who among us shall dwell with devouring Fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

Aquinas 22. q. 19. art. 2. tells us of a four-fold fear: there is a *Timor mundanus*, a worldly fear, when for fear of the Worlds frowns and hatred, we turn away from God. There is *Timor servilis*, a slavish fear, when meerly for fear of punishment there is some seeking unto God. There is *Timor filialis*, a child-like fear, when we fear offending God, and so follow and cleave unto him. Finally there is *Timor initialis*, an initial fear, which is partly a fear of Sin and partly a fear of Punishment. Such a fear was in the trembling Jaylour at first Conversion, who certainly enquired after the way to be saved both from sin and wrath, Act. 16. and a mixture of both we read of in the Saints: there is a childlike fear, Psal. 112. 1. *Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord and that delighteth greatly in his Commands*; And there is likewise a fear of punishment. Psal. 119. 120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.* This *Slavish* fear I am discoursing of, which is certainly bad, and when alone, only in those that are bad. Now because doubting Souls harp much upon this string, that they are acted meerly by slavish fear, and 'tis one of

of the difficultest doubts to remove, therefore I shall describe more largely those that in Religion are acted by this servile fear, that by proving of your selves you may know whether you are of the number.

1. They that are acted meerly by Slavish fear, *dislike nothing in Sin but the punishment*: Their eyes were never opened to see Sin as the Apostle lookt upon it, *out of measure sinful*: they never beheld the excellency of righteousness nor the evil of iniquity, but still Sin is as high as ever, in their affections, though fear restrain them from the acts of it. 'Tis said of a wicked man, that he *abhorreth not evil*, Psal. 36. 4. he does not abhor it when he fears to commit it. The Merchant in a Storm loves his Goods, and is sorry that he is reduced to that strait, that he must either throw his Goods overboard or lose his Life, and after the Tempest is at an end, he would be glad if his Goods might be recovered; just thus are they affected towards Sin, that are meerly acted by Slavish fear. Sin it self is liked, but Affliction, Death, and Hell fright them. They are unconcerned that God by their Sin is dishonoured, his goodness abused, his Law broken, and themselves enslaved and defiled and rendred hateful in his eyes, only they are dismayed at the punishment unto which their Sin exposes them.

2. They that are acted meerly by Slavish fear, are afraid of coming to the light, which may discover their Sin and themselves more fully to them: they see but too much already, they are unwilling to see more. Our Lord speaks generally concerning all evil men, *That they hate the light, neither come to the light lest their deeds should be reproved*, Joh. 3. 20. They that are lovers of sin must needs be also lovers of darkness, and enemies to plain dealing. *Ahab* humbled himself through fear of punishment, and yet cannot endure the faithful reproofing Prophet *Micaiah*. *There is one Micaiah but I hate him, for he prophesieth not good concerning me but evil*, 1 King. 22. 8. If thou approvest of a searching Ministry, and art willing to have thy sin and the plague of thy heart made more fully manifest: if thou art willing to hear all that evil which God speaks of thy Sin, in his Word, it argues thy heart is really alienated from it, and there is something more than Slavish fear.

3. Slavish fear has but an unconstant effect: This fear *κόλασιν ἔχει*, has torment, as the Apostle speaks, and no wonder if persons are weary of it, and endeavour to have their Consciences stupified, that they may have no remorse for sin past, and serve it for the future without

without disturbance. The will remaining unregenerate and corrupted, must needs be really desirous of a false peace, and to have the wound *healed, though it be but slightly.* The language therefore of such is, *Prophecy not unto us right things, prophecy unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits,* Esa. 30. 10. *Pharaoh* while the hand of God was upon him, was full of fear, he felt that the Lord Jehovah the God of *Israel* was above his match; and then he seems resolved to comply with the will of God, to let his people go to serve him: but the effect of this fear is but unconstant, though fear thaw'd his heart a little, like the shining of the Sun in a winters day, as soon as ever *he had respite, he hardned his heart again and refused to let Israel go,* Exod. 8. 15. If therefore we are desirous of a lasting change, and are willing to have our Consciences more thoroughly awakened, and more faithfully to perform their Office, 'tis a sign the will it self begins to be renewed by the special grace of God.

4. Slavish fear is accompanied *with hatred of God and of his Law.* The Slave fears his Master and hates him, and is sorry he must be subject to him. And the Apostle tells us, *That the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can*

can it be, Rom. 8. 7. Whilst any remain carnal, they are estranged from God, they desire not any fellowship with him, they like not his Yoke, but look upon his *commands as grievous*, and upon *himself as an hard and austere Master*, they are far from esteeming Gods commandments concerning all things to be right, and wishing that their ways were directed to keep his Statutes. Those therefore who like the Law of God, and consent unto it as good, and bleis the Lord that he has given them such a Law, and account it their priviledge and liberty that he will vouchsafe to rule them, and are troubled at the reluctancy that is in their Natures against the yoke of God, and cry as Ephraim did; *I am as a Bullock unaccustomed to the Toke, turn thou me and I shall be turned*, Jer. 31. 18. In such there is something beyond servile fear.

5. They that are acted meerly by Slavish fear *do not desire to be acted by love*. Sin and the Creature have their love without grudging, and they have no longings to *have their hearts directed into the love of God*. That promise, *The Lord thy God shall circumcise thy heart to love him with all thy heart and soul that thou mayest live*, Deut. 30. 6. is not prized, is not pleaded. If once therefore we begin to grudge our lusts, and the world, our affections,

sections, and desire they may be placed upon things above, Slavish fear does not act us, but the Sanctifying Spirit. Slavish fear cannot make us desire to be acted *not* by Slavish fear, but it must needs be some other Principle that is put within us. *Augustine* compares Childlike and Slavish fear unto two Women that are married: the one is Chaste, the other desires to be an Harlot, but is not one, through fear of her Husbands anger. The chaste one fears her Husbands displeasure, but loves his company; the wanton one fears her Husbands displeasure, but wishes his absence. Now suppose this wanton Wife should begin to grudge her heart to others, and should desire to love and delight in her Husband, she would then be no longer acted by a Slavish fear, but it would argue, her mind changed, and that there were some beginning of conjugal affection, and sense of her duty. A desire to love the Lord above all, can never be the product of meer fear, but manifests a sense that he is indeed most desirable.

6. They that are acted meerly by Slavish fear, though they are affrighted at the thoughts of Hell, yet Spiritual things are not suitable to them, they do not mind and savour the things of the Spirit, but only the things of the Flesh, which shews an unchanged heart though there

be an awakened Conscience. The heart of such is all for the earth and earthly things, and these things are really prefer'd before grace and glory : The World unto such unrenewed ones is lookt upon as a better and more proper portion, than God himself. If therefore the World is become low in our esteem, and the vanity of it evident, and we had rather have the Lord to be our God and Father and portion, than to have the greatest abundance of earthly enjoyments without him : this speaks a real love and not a servile fear only, 'tis a good sign when the greatest outward felicity and prosperity is judged inferior to that *happinefs of having the Lord to be our God*, Psal. 144. ult.

7. They that are acted meerly by Slavish fear, *are not jealous of themselves and afraid lest they should be acted by nothing else.* This very concernedness and godly jealousy argues gracious desires and principles. In a word, Slavish fear will never carry us so far as to make us consent unto a true and lasting Conversion unto God. *False motives can never make us desire to be truly sincere and upright Christians, and to be acted only by motives that are right.* If therefore in Religion, we are willing that our Principles should be pure and good, our ends right, and our actions and the manner

manner of doing them according to the will of God, it may serve to satisfie us that we are of *Dauids* mind, who prayed, (and such a prayer never meets with a deaf ear) *Psal. 119. 80. Let my heart be sound in thy Statutes that I be not ashamed.*

Case 5. The fifth Case is this; *How may we know that we have indeed accepted Christ?* He is offered unto all, received by few. He stands at the door and knocks, but few hear his voice and open the door to him. We may call our selves by his Name, and profess to be his, and receive his Ordinances and engage in them, and yet not receive himself: and yet this Reception must be, else there can be no Reconciliation, no Adoption, no Salvation. Thus therefore we may prove our selves and know whether we have indeed received Christ.

1. If we have accepted Christ, *we have seen so as to be affected with our need of him.* The prodigal was ready to perish in the far Country, necessity drove him home to his Fathers house. The *Israelites* in the Wilderness were stung and ready to die by the fiery Serpents, and then they lookt up unto the Brazen Serpent for cure. We shall never upon right terms receive our Lord and Saviour, till we perceive we are lost and ruin'd and must needs be everlastingly miserable without him. Oh then we shall

shall subscribe to any Articles of agreement, that Jesus may be ours, who can *justify us by his blood, and deliver us from the wrath to come,* 1 Thes. 1. ult.

2. If we have accepted Christ, we have been made dead to the Law. Rom. 7. 4. *Wherefore my Brethren ye are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another: even to him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.* So Gal. 2. 19. *I am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God.* You must not imagine by deadness to the Law, is meant such a disobligation from it, that we have no tie upon us to obey it; for the Apostle here speaks of living unto God, and bringing forth fruit to him: Now living unto God, and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness is what the law requires. Then therefore we are dead to the Law, when we are not irritated and provoked to transgress, because the Law forbids transgression: and when we expect no justification before God by our obedience to the Law. *By the deeds of the Law shall no Flesh be justified in his sight,* Rom. 3. 20. *There is not any Law given which can give life to the Sinner: for then righteousness and justification should have been by the Law,* Gal. 3. 21. Those therefore that receive Christ receive him, as *The Lord their Righteousness,* and dare not expect justification before
 God

God upon the account of any obedience or righteousness of their own.

3. If we have accepted Christ, *we are reconciled to the Cross*: we shall rely upon Christ crucified being persuaded that the blood shed upon the Cross for Sin, was the blood of him that was truly God as well as man, and consequently sufficient to make an atonement for us, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, *1 Joh. 1. 7.* We shall also conform to the crucifixion of Christ, by *crucifying the Flesh with the affections and lusts of it*, *Gal. 5. 24.* The World also will be crucified to us, *Gal. 6. 14.* Sin has laid it under a Curse, and we shall look upon the World, as the Jews did on Christ when they crucified him, *as having no form, nor comeliness*, no such beauty in it, that we should so eagerly desire it. Finally we shall be willing to *take up the Cross, and deny our selves*, and suffer persecution, and go through any tribulation which lies in our way to the Kingdom of Heaven. They that are offended at persecution, and in such *times of temptation fall away*, never received Christ or his Word into their hearts indeed.

4. If we have accepted Christ, we *submit unto his Scepter, entertain his Word and are willing to obey him*. God hath exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, and Believers must gladly consent that this Saviour, should be exalted

exalted into the throne of their hearts and rule as Prince there. They who will not have this Lord to reign over them are Enemies, and shall be dealt with and destroyed as Enemies at last. But he is *the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9. Whom he saves, he makes by his power willing and obedient. 'Twas said unto the Lord, Messiah; *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, Psal. 110. 3.

5. If we have accepted Christ, we are born again and made new Creatures. 2 Cor. 5. 17. *If any man be in Christ he is a new Creature.* And Job. 1. 12, 13. They that receive and believe in Christ, are said to *be born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*. Grace does not come by natural descent: the flesh has no will or desire after it, man though never so eminent is not able to work it, but 'tis alone from God. And all true Believers are born of God, they have a new heart, a new nature, new desires and affections, new designs are carried on, and they walk in newness of life. The old man indeed remains in part, but they are burthen'd with it, and desire more fully to put on the new, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

6. If we have accepted Christ, we do, and we see cause, to admire the Father's love in sending him.

him : we look upon him as the greatest gift that ever was given or could be given to the sons of men. He is *all in all*, Col. 3. 11. He *fills all in all*, Eph. 1. ult. If Christ be ours God is ours, Heaven is ours, all is ours. Here's a height that none can reach, a depth that none can fathom, a length that none can measure, a breadth that none can comprehend. How do Believers admire Jesus and the love of the Father that gave him. They know *that gift of God*, and wonder at the Donors kindness, 1 Joh. 4. 9; 10. *In this, i. e. in this above all, was manifested the love of God towards us because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World that we might live through him.* If ye talk of love herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our Sins.

7. If we have accepted Christ, *we live upon him by faith*, we are strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. *I live*, says the Apostle, *yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me*, Gal. 2. 20. And thus relying upon the sufficient grace and strength of our Lord Jesus, which is made perfect in our weakness, we shall resolve to follow the Lamb without standing still, without turning aside, without drawing back from him, we shall not coward-

ly fly, nor treacherously revolt from him, *but follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes.*

Case 6. The sixth Case is this ; *When may Conversion be judged to be sincere and true?* Man is departed from the Lord, and he is brought to this strait, either he must turn to God, or he must burn in Hell, and every turning will not serve our turn. The Scripture speaks of a *feigned Conversion*, such a Convert was treacherous *Judah*, Jer. 3. 10. It concerns us to prove our selves, whether we are Converts in reality : which may be thus known,

1. Sincere Converts have been made to *consider their own ways, and the evil and destructiveness of them.* David tells us, *he thought on his ways and turned*, Psal. 119. 59. They have lookt to the end of the broad road in which they once went, and seen that burning Lake at the end of it : destruction and misery is in that way, and so they dare not proceed. He never turns from Sin indeed that sees no harm or danger in it. Those Scriptures, *The Soul that sins shall die*, and *The wages of Sin is death*, are deeply engraven upon the Converts heart.

2. Sincere Converts are *really grieved that they turn'd no sooner*, they reflect with sorrow
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and shame upon that time, wherein they were foolish and disobedient and deceived, and served diverse lusts and pleasures, Tit. 3. 3. and wish they had been so wise as to have served another, a better Master. How are they afflicted that Sin and Satan and Mammon, have stolen away so many of their few days, and that their lusts should devour the cream and prime of all their time. They think with themselves, how much Sin might have been prevented, how much Grace might have been gotten, how much might have been done for God, if they had turned sooner: and this makes them to live the remainder of their time in the flesh, not to the lusts of men, but to the will of God, 1 Pet. 4. 2.

3. Sincere Converts turn unto God himself, they own him as a Lord, and eye him as their happiness in their Conversion to him. Jer. 4. 1. *If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto Me.* They seek the Lord himself, and his strength and his face evermore; the mercies of God indeed they do and may desire: but principally the Father of them, they see that God has all, is all, and can be infinitely more than all things unto them, they come to him that they may enjoy him here and for ever. *Lord, be my God, my Father, my Inheritance, give thy self to me, and then thou wilt deal*

most bountifully with me ! That's the Converts language.

4. Sincere Converts *turn with their whole heart.* This is called for, *Joel. 2. 12. Turn ye even unto me with all your heart :* And the want of this is complain'd of, *Jer. 3. 10. Her treacherous Sister Judah hath not turned to me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord.* When the whole heart is turned, no iniquity is regarded there, but all is disliked ; no creature is suffered to have the highest room, the whole heart is resigned and given unto God. As the Besieged render up the Castle to the Conquerer, that he may dispose of it as he pleases, so the Convert renders himself : all the powers and faculties of his Soul he yields, and consents to have all renewed, all sanctified, which is a perfection of parts, and a perfection of degrees is desired and aspired unto : he longs to be turned more and more, and to be kept from returning again to folly.

5. Sincere Converts *turn their feet unto Gods testimonies.* *Psal. 119. 59. I turned my feet unto thy testimonies :* They conform to the Word which God has spoken as their Rule. This declares best of all, *Quid pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,* what is fair and what

what is filthy, what is profitable and what's destructive. By this Word they order their hearts and conversations. He that despises the Word of God and the Commands of it, is not sincerely converted, but damnably deluded. True Converts keep close to Scriptures and Ordinances, and never fancy themselves above them: but with *David, desire to dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of their lives*, (for in his House Ordinances are administered) *that they may behold the beauty of the Lord and enquire in his Temple*, Ps. 27. 4.

Case 7. The seventh Case follows; *What are the lower degrees of true Grace?* Grace in Scripture being compared to a *grain of Mustard seed*, which is *indeed the least of all seeds* that are sown in the field, *Mat. 13. 31, 32.* Hereby there is an intimation given us, that Grace is but little in the first beginnings of it, and because small, 'tis not so easie to be discerned; Yet the least measure of true Grace being of far greater value and more precious than Gold that perishes, 'tis worth our while to bring it to the Touchstone that it may be proved and known. Before I resolve the Case, wherein I must be very wary, lest the unsound presume, and lest the sincere be discouraged: I shall premise these particulars.

1. True Grace has *different degrees, and*

the higher and lower degrees are vastly different from each other; Such a difference as there is between a grain of Mustard-seed, and the Plant grown up so that the Birds of the air may lodge in the branches of it; Such a difference as there is between a new born infant, and a man grown: truly such a difference there is between weak and strong Grace; and yet as the infant has all the parts which the man hath, and is of the same kind with him: so weak grace and strong grace are of the same kind: and the weak is true and saving as well as the strong. That there is a difference in the degrees of Grace is evident. Some are babes, and some are strong men, Heb. 5. 13, 14. Some are styled little children, some young men, and some are called Fathers, 1 Joh. 2, 12, 13.

2. True Grace is consistent with little knowledge in the things of God. There may be a great measure of notional knowledge, where there is no true Grace at all; and there may be true Grace, where there is a great weakness as to understanding. The Disciples when first they were chosen out of the World and regenerated by the Spirit, understood but little of the Gospel: Peter himself would have dissuaded Christ from dying, not knowing that his blood was to be the price of the Churches Redemption, Mat. 16. 21, 22. The very Apostles themselves wondered what the Resurrection of Christ

Christ from the dead should mean. Surely they had not then much light, and yet they had true Grace. And though these and such like great Articles of the Christian Faith are more fully revealed, so that 'tis necessary to salvation to know them: yet in some heads the knowledge is but little, where yet the heart is truly turned unto God, and prizes Christ above all.

3. Where there is true Grace, *there may be many doubts and fears.* Our Lord says unto Peter: *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* Mat. 14. 31. And unto all his Disciples he speaks thus; *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* Mat. 8. 26. Faith they had, and yet 'twas little, and this faith is own'd, though accompanied with doubts and fears. Doubting believers for ought I know are the far *major* part of them. Sincere Souls are prone to be jealous of themselves, and they apprehend how much it stands them upon to make sure work for Eternity. Hereupon Satan and the remainders of unbelief take the advantage, and they are still questioning their state, and are full of fears that nothing is wrought in them, but what is common unto Hypocrites.

4. Where there is true Grace, *there may be*

much corruption. I grant that Grace reigns wherever it is in truth, and yet much Sin may remain though it be an underling: thus the Oyl is at the top of the Vessel, though the Water which is under it be a far greater quantity. Grace is compared unto *smoking Flax*: now in the smoking Flax there's much of stench and cloudiness, and but little heat; and yet this heat is taken notice of, and cherished, and the promise is; *Mat. 12. 20. A bruised Reed shall be not break, and smoking Flax shall be not quench till he send forth judgment unto victory.*

5. Those that have true Grace, *may fall into Sins that are foul and scandalous*, and by such falls they break their bones, disturb their peace, and wound their Consciences, and weaken themselves exceedingly, so that they are the apter to stumble and fall again upon the next temptation. When notorious Sins are thus committed by Believers, Grace is at a very low ebb, and yet *the living Water* which springs up to everlasting life, (so Grace is called) is not quite dried up. It is strange, yet not so strange as true, that *righteous Lot who vexed his soul from day to day because of the Sodomites unlawful deeds*, should give way to drunkenness first; though 'tis not so strange that he should commit incest afterwards, for he

he that is drunken knows not what he does. Though he was delivered out of *Sodom*, yet he carried but too much of *Sodom* within him in his heart. *David* a man after Gods own heart, yet in his heart there did kindle an impure and hellish flame of lust whereby *Bathsheba* was scorched and hurt as well as himself, and which was the occasion of the death of poor *Urijah*. Now though *David's* joy was quite gone, yet the Sanctifying Spirit was not clean departed, though his operation was for a while suspended: therefore he prays for the restoring of joy, but that the holy Spirit might not be taken away, Psal. 51. 11, 12.

6. Those that have true Grace may send forth such sad complaints as speak a nearness to despair. *Job* cries out, *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poyson whereof drinketh up my Spirit, the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me*, Job. 6. 4. The Church complains, Lam. 3. *God hath set, me in dark places as those that have been dead of old: he hath hedged me about that I cannot get out, and made my chain heavy: he hath filled me with bitterness and made me drunken with Wormwood; also when I cry and shout he shutteth out my prayer.* This was worst of all to be in a deplorable case, and not to be regarded when crying for relief and pitty. Eminent Saints

Saints have sometimes concluded themselves forsaken and forgotten: no wonder if they that have weak Grace, confidently affirm they have none at all, and as peremptorily conclude they never shall have any.

These things being premised, I am to tell you which are the lower degrees of true grace.

1. *A sense and weariness of hardness of heart,* argues some measure of true Grace: it shews some life and softness when deadness and hardness is felt as a burthen. Though hardness of heart was incomparably the worst of all the plagues of *Egypt*, yet *this, Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* were never sensible of, nor desirous to be delivered from it, though other plagues they cry to have removed. That's true sorrow, when the heart is grieved, it is so hard, and can sorrow no more for Sin: Such an heart will carefully shun whatever has an hardning effect; and oh, how is that promise prized, and the accomplishment of it longed for, *Ezek. 36. 26. A new heart will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* And when once Sinners are sensible so as to *inquire* and *seek* unto the God of *Israel* to do this for them, here is a good work begun in them. I grant
such

such may fear sometimes they are judicially hardned, but that very fear plainly shews the contrary ; if they were under such a judgment, they would cease to be afraid of it.

2. It argues a beginning of a work of Grace, when a Sinner is troubled to see such an opposition in his corrupted nature against God, and desires to be turned indeed ; Thus Ephraim bemoans himself, that he was as a Bullock unaccustomed to the Yoke, and he cries to be instructed, and that God would shew his power and grace in the turning of him, Jer. 31. 18. and vers. 20. we find the Lord owns Ephraim as his dear Son, as a pleasant Child, and says, he does earnestly remember him, and will surely have mercy upon him. It argues a new nature, when we are weary of the old, and that the bent and inclination of the heart is really changed : when backwardness unto what is good begins to be burthenfom.

3. There is a work of Grace, where there is a resolution to go unto God and confess all Sin unto him without hiding any through a desire to keep it. When David thus without guile does resolve upon Confession, God resolves upon Remission, and forgives him presently. Psal. 32. 5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid, I said I will

will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin Selah. Hark what Solomon says, *He that covereth his Sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* And the Apostle speaks a great word; *1 Joh. 1. 9. If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* O thou sensible and drooping and trembling Soul, who comest unto God with black Bills of Indictment against thy self! Is all thy wickedness down there that thou knowest? Hast thou not left out one or other that is a darling? *Oh no here are all down, and the darling sins in a special manner acknowledged and aggravated, and I am willing to forsake all, as well as to have the pardon of all.* If it be so chear up; for *Confess and be saved,* is the Gospel language. When David said, *I have sinned against the Lord,* Nathan answers, *The Lord hath put away thy Sin thou shalt not die,* 2 Sam. 12. 13.

4. There is a work of grace, where there is a desire to believe. He that searcheth the heart takes notice of the desires which are there; and as a desire to kill is Murther, as a lusting after a Woman is Adultery, so a desire after that which is good is accepted. A desire to repent is repenting, and a desire

to believe is believing. *Abraham* is said again and again to have offered up *Isaac*, because he had a will to do it at Gods Command, though actually he never did it, *Heb.* 11. 17. which shews the truth of that passage of *Augustine*, *Coronat Deus intus bonam voluntatem ubi non invenit facultatem*. Where there is a defect of ability, God does own and crown a real willingness. Such desires must needs be very pleasing unto God, who willeth that his grace should be earnestly desired, and therefore says the same Father, *Desiderare auxilium gratiæ, est initium gratiæ*. Grace is begun, when Grace is desired. When once a Sinner desires with his heart to believe, and cries out with the man in the Gospel, *Lord help my unbelief*, *Mar.* 9. 24. When he desires that his heart may be set wide open, that Christ who knocks there may enter in; when he desires to receive Christ, just so as Christ is willing to be received, and to rely upon him as the onely Mediatour and Saviour, renouncing all other Confidences. Here is saving faith most certainly.

5. There is a work of Grace, where there is a weariness of other Lords, and a willingness to submit unto Christ the Lord of Glory. 'Tis a good sign when there is a consent to cast off the yoke of Sin, and to take on us
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the easie yoke of Christ : for none but they that are truly gracious are willing to be *delivered from the power of darkness, and to be translated into the Kingdom of the Son of God, Col. 1. 13.* If we dislike the *bondage of corruption*, and are unwilling to be *led captive by Satan at his will* ; if we look upon our selves as *foolish and deceived*, while we were *disobedient, and served diverse lusts and pleasures, Tit. 3. 3.* If we count the Service of our Lord Jesus freedom, and freedom indeed : and *lust against the Flesh* which counts his Commands grievous ; certainly the Spirit of the Lord has begun to set us at liberty, our eyes have been opened, our hearts changed, *Voluntas non esset libera, nisi liberata.* The will would not be thus free to be subject unto Christ, unless it had been made free by Him..

6. There is a work of Grace, where there is a *desire to fear the name of God. Neh. 1. 11.* *Let thine ear be attentive*, and so it was, *unto the prayer of thy Servants who desire to fear thy Name.* That Soul is renewed that would fain stand in awe of God, and of his Word, and has a will to do good, though evil is present, and the Flesh is weak. The weakness of the Flesh, Christ excuses, as long as he *saw the Spirit of the Disciples was willing to have done their duty, Mat. 26. 41.* That which was

was Gods wish concerning *Israel* of old, is it thy wish concerning thy self? *Oh that there were an heart in me to fear the Lord, and to keep all his Commandments always, that it may be well with me for ever?* Deut. 5. 29. This is certainly the breathing of the new creature. In such there is a consent to be the Lords, and to serve him, and a trouble when they are overpower'd by sin and temptation, and a jealousy lest they should be deceived; which shews that their desire to fear and obey the Lord is the more honest and sincere.

7. There is a work of Grace, where there is an *uncontentedness without God*: before, the Sinner was without Christ, and liv'd without God in the World, as he thought well enough, Eph. 2. 12. but the heart being savingly changed cannot be put off with the World, or any thing therein for its portion; as the Needle being toucht by the Loadstone never ceases trembling, till 'tis turned towards the Northern Pole: so the heart of one that has grace cannot be quieted or satisfied without the God of Heaven. *Pliny* in his Natural History, l. 36. c. 4. tells us, that the Diamond, which is a Stone of far greater value, being put near the Loadstone, *ferrum non patitur abstrahi*, does not suffer the Loadstone to draw the Iron to it. The World will lose its

its magnetick and drawing vertue, when once the Lord has toucht the heart, and manifested himself. Gracious Souls had rather have God theirs, than all the World theirs; they see the Creatures unsuitableness and insufficiency, and that their Souls do then return unto their rest when they return unto their God.

Case 8. The eighth Case follows, which is this; *How may Grace be discovered under Spiritual Desertion?* Although the Lord never quite leaves his people, yet he may withdraw the sense of his Presence, suspending the quickening and comforting influences of his Spirit: and then they that before were like *Eden* or *Sharon*, are become like unto the Desert, before, they resembled a Tree whose leaves are fair, and the fruit plentiful and good; But under desertion, they are like a Tree in the Winter season, the Sun being withdrawn, when neither Fruit nor Leaves appear. Now, how shall the Saints be known to be Children of Light, when they thus walk in darkness? I answer;

1. *Saints under Desertion are troubled at Gods absence.* What perplexity was there in the Spouses Spirit, when her Beloved had withdrawn himself? *Cant. 5. 6. I opened to*

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my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone; my Soul failed when he spake, I sought him but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. 'Tis as real a sign of true love to mourn at the Lords absence, as to rejoyce in his presence; for they who grieve when he withdraws, will be glad when he returns. *Thou didst hide thy face,* says David, *and I was troubled,* Psal. 30. 7. God may hide his face from a true Believer, but a Believer shews himself to be so, by being troubled when God hides his face.

2. Saints under Desertion *justify the Lord in deserting of them*, though holy Job stands stiffly in the vindication of his Upright-ness, against his Friends who charged him with Hypocrisie; yet withal he confesses his Sins unto God. Job 7. 20. *I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?* And chap. 13. 26. *Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.* Deserted Saints dare not charge God foolishly, but lay the blame of what they endure at their own door; they have been proud of enlargements, therefore God has justly left them to be straitned; they were unthankful for comforts, therefore just it is their sorrows should return; they were not

so watchful against Sin; 'twas righteous in God to hide his face, nay, they confess, he would be righteous, if he should be favourable no more, but cast them off for ever.

3. Saints under Desertion endeavour to find out the cause of Gods deserting them, that it may be removed. Hark what Job prays for; Job 13. 23, 24. *Make me to know my transgression, and my sin, wherefore hidest thou thy face and countest me for thy enemy?* As the Seamen were willing that sailed with *Jonah*, to know for whose sake the Tempest was so furious upon them: and as *Joshua* was desirous to find out the man that had taken of the accursed thing, and proved the troubler of *Israel*: So Deserted Souls cry unto God to discover what has offended him, and grieved his holy Spirit; And as *Jonah* that raised the Tempest was thrown overboard, as *Achan* that troubled *Israel* was stoned unto death, so having found out their Sins, that have disturbed their peace, and provoked their God, they consent to have them thoroughly mortified: that which is meet they say unto God, *I have born thy displeasure, I will not offend any more, that which I see not, teach thou me, if I have done iniquity, I will do no more,* Job 34. 31, 32.

4. Saints under Desertion, though the act-
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ings of faith may not, yet fear is more evident in them. Esa. 50. 10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light. Deserted Believers though they cannot with confidence call God their Father, which is their trouble, yet they are resolved to obey him as their Lord : when he seems to fly from them, they are afraid of losing him, therefore they lament and follow after him. No wonder that Gods withdrawing raises fear in his people : for ordinarily Desertion, speaks Divine displeasure, and is so very sore a trial and distress, that the continuance of it may very well be feared.

5. Saints under Desertion, are troubled for want of quickening as well as want of comfort : therefore they cry for the return of the Spirit that he may revive their graces, and make them lively and vigorous, and active in the Service of God, as well as restore peace and consolation. Deadness certainly was *Dauids* burthen, when he prayed so often that the Lord would quicken him. Deserted Saints do feel the prevalency of the body of death, therefore they do look, and they have reason to look unto Him, *who came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly, Joh. 10. 10.*

6. Saints under Desertion are unsatisfied till God return, that's their language; *Psal. 90. 13, 14. Return, O Lord how long? And let it repent thee concerning thy Servants: O satisfie us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoyce and be glad all our days.* Their life lies in his favour, weeping continues while his face is hid: when their God comes, their joy comes to them again. And as they are desirous that God should turn to them, so also that themselves may be healed and turned unto God. The Church had revolted, and God was angry; angry not only *at their Sins*, but also *at their prayers*; in this sad case, the Church is earnest for her own recovery and return to God, as well as for the shining of Gods face upon her: therefore she cries once, twice, thrice, *Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, cause thy face to shine and we shall be saved, Psal. 80. 3, 7, 19.*

Case 9. The ninth Case is this; *How Grace may be discerned under the prevalency of that sad and black distemper of Melancholy.* The torture of this malady strangers to it cannot conceive; but they that are afflicted with it do know their own bitterness. And the advantage which Satan hath hereby is unconceivably great. 'Tis ordinary for him to represent the Lord unto Melancholick ones, as furious and revenging and implacable, and irreconcilable:

lable : as hating them from everlasting to everlasting. Oh whath dismal thoughts have they of themselves ! The darkness and confusion of their heads, they call judicial blindness ; the deadness of their hearts, they call judicial hardness ; and when the black vapours ascend, and seize upon their spirits, and torment and affright them, as if Nature were just ready to be dissolved : this they are apt to think the hellish agonies of *Cain* and *Judas*, and to conclude them the foretastes and certain forerunners of eternal Wrath and Vengeance.

Satan represents the grace they have, as *no grace*, that he may discourage them from duty, if he does not persuade them to act desperately against their own lives. Then a thought comes in, that God is an hard Lord, who will not give grace, though they desire it above all the World, but is resolved to destroy them. Again Satan represents the Truth they have embraced, and which the generality of the Generation of the Righteous do embrace, as *no truth* : and violently hurries them, and bears it in upon their spirits, (*especially in duty to distract and dead their hearts*) that they ought to turn to this or that or t'other erroneous way, else they will never know peace. Whatever comforts and encouragements the Gospel hands forth to them, they with a strange obstinacy reject as too good for them, and not belong-

ing at all to them. And though the hand and hatred of Satan be in all this, yet he is so subtle as to hide himself under the dark shades of Melancholy, so that he is unperceived. Now for the relief of such, I shall shew how the truth of Grace may be discerned under the prevalency of Melancholy.

1. Melancholick ones that are gracious have usually *very low thoughts of themselves*: they have not confidence in the flesh, but are convinced, that their own righteousness is rags, their wisdom folly, their strength weakness: they see that no flesh has reason to glory in the Lords presence, and being thus humble, God has promised to have respect to them. *Psal. 138. 6. Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; And Psal. 10. 17. Lord thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart: an heart prepared to pray they desire, thou wilt raise thine ear to hear.*

2. Melancholick ones, who have grace, though they are full of fears, yet *their fears are without Scripture ground*, they are apt to conclude themselves Hypocrites, but not from Scripture premises. Satan in a violent way does inject such thoughts, that *God hates them, never was indeed near them, or has quite left*

left them, and never any Saints were in the like condition, and hereupon follows a *stinging perplexity*, but not one word of God is produced to prove all this. Though Satans injections are direful and doleful, yet the Word speaks hopefully concerning them, because they are weary of Sin, willing to close with Christ, and hunger after righteousness and true holiness, and had rather have an assurance of the love of God, and *the light of his countenance*, than *Corn and Wine*, and all the things of the World in the greatest plenty and abundance.

3. Melancholick ones, who have grace, though they are filled with a great many fancies and fears, yet *the fear of God is predominant*, and they are afraid of Sin as the greatest evil. The favour of God is most desirable, his anger most formidable in their esteem: therefore they dare not use sinful or suspected means for their relief and help. They are not like *Saul*, who in his distress and sadness ran to the *Witch of Endor*: they dare not turn Gluttons and Drunkards, nor attempt to drown their sorrows in sensuality, but had rather remain Melancholick Saints, than become boon Companions and jolly Sinners. They do indeed imagine and fear a thousand things without reason; but truly

with a great deal of reason, the fear of God rules in their hearts, and they eschew what is evil in his sight.

4. Melancholick ones, who have grace, *endeavour to improve their melancholy after a gracious manner.* Now the World appears vain, Creatures are miserable comforters; delights have lost their relish, and are become undelightful; They take hold of the advantage, to get more loose from the World, and more above it. If one *perplexing fume* turns all the World into an empty bubble, into an insignificant cypher; Why, says the gracious Soul, should I ever dote upon this World more? Under Melancholy, Death seems very near: and as they are going to bed, or at other times, they have very strong and startling impressions of Eternity: Gracious Souls take hold of this advantage the more seriously to prepare for Death, and to provide for Eternity, and this argues they are indeed the Children of Wisdom, *Psal. 90. 12,*

5. Melancholick ones, who have grace, *have a great care of the Gospels credit:* nay, truly sometimes this lies nearer their hearts, than their own lives. They are afraid of madness and frenzy, lest Religion which they are professors of, should suffer by it; they resist
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temptations to self-Murther, because if they who have heard and talkt so much of the Gospel should lay violent hands upon themselves, prophane Sinners would speak evil of the way of Truth, and be more strongly prejudiced and hardned against the Gospel, as a Doctrine that has but a bad tendency : this shews that they love the Gospel in truth, and consequently *are of God*, Joh. 8. 47. This care of the Gospel farther appears, in that when their melancholy abates, their seriousness remains. Indeed the better their heads are, their hearts are in a better frame ; because then their Souls and their Grace can act with greater freedom. They long for clean hearts, and desire clear heads, that with heads and hearts they may be more serviceable unto God.

6. Melancholick ones, who have grace, *in all their distress and trouble desire to look unto God* ; though they fear he is an enemy, yet they cannot but look to him for help ; though they do but chatter as a Crane, and mourn as a Dove, yet they cannot refrain speaking *Hezekiahs* and *Jobs* language : *O Lord I am oppressed, undertake for me*, Esa. 38. 14. *I am full of confusion, see thou my affliction*, Job 10. 15.

Case 10. The tenth Case is this ; *How may Repentance be known to be true, when 'tis a Death.*

Death-bed Repentance? Or just before a Malefactor's Execution? It must needs be granted that Repentance at last is possible, and that's all; probable or usual 'tis not. One instance we have in Scripture to hinder despair, and but one, to hinder presumption. To dally and to delay in Religion, how dangerous is it? 'Tis perfect madness, willingly to lie under the wrath of God, under the Devils power, under the guilt and dominion of Sin, and upon the brink of Hell one minute longer. The longer you delay, Sin grows stronger, evil habits are more rooted, Satan entangles you faster in his snare, the heart grows harder, the Spirit of the Lord is more grieved, and Repentance becomes more difficult and unlikely. We have cause to fear, that many thousands who talked of Repentance hereafter, have been surprized by Death, and have suddenly dropt into Hell before that *Hereafter* came. Well, but some at last have seem'd very penitent; and, How shall the truth of Repentance be discerned? Unto this I answer;

1. Such who repent truly at last, are very ready to accuse, and very severe in judging of themselves: they give glory to God, and take shame to themselves, they justify the Lord in putting a period to their days; and acknowledge that he might justly laugh at their calamity,

imity, and mock at their fear, and distress, and anguish, and refuse to pity and pardon, and kill the Body and damn the Soul together. This judging of themselves is a very good sign, and there is a promise of escaping judgment; that is, condemnation; annexed thereunto, 1 Cor. 11. 31. For if we should judge our selves, we should not be judged.

2. Such who repent truly at last, are *very jealous over their own Spirits*, lest the distress they are in, and the nearness unto death, be the only motive unto Repentance, therefore their cries are the more earnest to be sincere Converts. They prize new hearts, and beg that God would deliver them from their natural guile and wickedness, and make them indeed new creatures. Oh, how do they long, not only for a pardon: but that they may feel the power of the renewing and sanctifying Spirit of Christ. *Heal me and I shall be healed, turn me and I shall be turned, save me and I shall be saved*, Jer. 17. 14. are their strong cries; and oh with what vehement desires are they accompanied!

3. Such who repent at last truly, are *filled with an holy indignation*, that all their time and strength has been wasted in serving Sin and Satan, and dishonouring that God that made

made them, & to whom they owe themselves. How angry are they and displeased at themselves, that when they should have been *labouring in the Lords Vineyard*, they either were *standing idle in the Market*, or wrought *iniquity with both hands earnestly*. Now this holy indignation is by the Apostle made an argument of *sorrowing after a godly manner*, of *repentance unto salvation*, 2 Cor. 7. 11.

4. Such who repent truly at last, *do look unto Jesus* ; Thus did the Thief upon the Cross, *Lord remember me*, Luk. 23. 42. Christ is their hope, and the grace of God in him, which does superabound, though Sin has never so much abounded. They look upon his Blood as the Blood of God, and able to do away the greatest guilt, the foulest spot and stain, the most monstrous defilements. They perceive that the Blood of Jesus *speaks better things than the Blood of Abel*, Heb. 12. 24. Cries louder for Mercy and Salvation, than *Abels* did for Vengeance : Hereupon they are encouraged and enabled to act the faith of reliance : and *believing on Jesus they shall not be confounded*, 1 Pet. 2. 6. Oh, how is this Saviour now prized ! How are they grieved at their former and so long continued neglect of him. And though the Lord forgets their Sins, they cannot but remember them ; though he justifies

justifies them, they cannot cease condemning themselves; the truth is, they are *ashamed and confounded, and open not their mouths because of their shame, though the Lord is pacified towards them for all that they have done*, Ezek. 16. 3.

5. They who repent truly at last, have a care of Gods honour, and are willing to prevent others delaying their repentance. Their mouths therefore are full of cautions, they blame their own folly, and exhort others to grow wiser, and while 'tis called to day, to harden their hearts no longer. The Earl of Rochesters dying care was to have his *prophane and lewd Writings burnt, as being only fit to promote Vice and immorality, by which he had so highly offended God, and shamed and blasphemed that holy Religion into which he was baptized, and all his obscene and filthy pictures which were so notoriously scandalous*. He wisht his Son might never be one of those wretched creatures who *pride themselves in abusing God and Religion; adding, That no Fortunes or Honours were comparable to the love and favour of God*. To a Friend of some Note that came to see him, he thus expressed himself; *Oh remember that you condemn God no more: We have been all mistaken in our conceits and opinions, our persuasions have been false and groundless, therefore God grant you repentance*. And in his dying Remonstrance

strance signed before Witness, having bewailed his pernicious opinions and vile practices, he thus speaks to all whom he had drawn into Sin. *I warn them in the name of God, and as they regard the welfare of their immortal Souls, no more to deny his Being, or his Providence, or despise his goodness; no more to make a mock of Sin, or contemn the pure and excellent Religion of my ever blessed Redeemer, through whose merits alone, I, one of the greatest of Sinners do yet hope for mercy and forgiveness.*

- *Case 11.* The eleventh Case follows, which is this; *How may Grace be discovered in Saints that are fallen?* When I speak of the falls of Saints, I mean not their Sins *quotidianæ incurſionis*, of daily incurſion: for there is not a day, nor a duty wherein the best do not in some respect offend; but faults that are more gross and offensive, that approach nearer unto the nature of presumptuous transgressions. That Saints do sometimes thus fall is evident from Scripture and Experience, therefore all of them should be the more watchful, & humble, and cry to be upheld, living by faith on that God who is of power to establish them, Rom. 16. 25. & Rom. 11. 20. *Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith; be not highminded but fear.* But when they do fall, there is a difference between the manner of theirs

theirs and others transgressing: 'tis said of such as are born of God, *that they cannot sin because they are born of God*, 1 Joh. 3. 9. i. e. they cannot sin in such a manner as the unregenerate do. I am to present to you a Child of Light under an Eclipse, and yet even now there is a great difference between him and them that are under the power of darkness.

1. A Saint when he falls, *sins not with the full consent of his will*: not only his Conscience does declare against Sin, but even his Will so far as sanctified and renewed is also against it. His purpose is *to take heed to his ways, that he may not offend*, Psal. 39. 1. therefore when he falls he is surprized, and in the hurry of a temptation: and though in this hurry Conscience is not heard, and corruption like a torrent carries him away, yet there is a secret dislike of Sin which arises from the *Spirits lusting against the Flesh*: Hence it is that Saints cannot take that delight in Sin which others do, because their wills do not fully close with the temptation. Though in *David's* transgression there was too much of deliberation and contrivance, especially in his carriage towards *Uriah*, yet if you consider the matter, you may find he was in a hurry all along; first, he was hurried by a sinful and inordinate affection; and afterwards by fear of shame, in case what he had done should be discover'd.

2. A Saint though he may fall, yet *does not ordinarily allow himself in Sin*, neither does he make use of the falls of Believers which the Scripture records, as a plea for such an allowance, as wicked men commonly do. He looks upon the works of darkness as unfruitful, and desires to have no fellowship with them, because these will hinder his fellowship and communion with God. He cannot be called a *Worker of iniquity*, because he prays with *David*, and that sincerely: *Deliver me from all my transgressions*, Ps. 39. 8. and, *Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy Statutes*, Ps. 119. 5.

3. A Saint never falls so far as *to chuse a new Lord and Master*, he never wholly casts off the yoke of Christ, nor resolves to be willingly subject to the law of sin. Acts of disobedience indeed he may be guilty of; but when Satan propounds it to him, and persuades him to renounce the Lords service, and to give up himself to the service of diverse lusts and pleasures: he cannot bear the thought of it, for he knows the wages of sin is death, and Christ is incomparably the best Master. He never consents to be wholly under the bondage of corruption as once he was, but often prays, that *no iniquity may have the dominion over him*, Psal. 119. 133. and especially that he may be *kept back from presumptuous sins*, which are such great transgressions, Psal. 19. 13.

4. A Saint never falls so far as *to take up with any portion beneath God himself*. His Soul hath said, *The Lord is my portion*, Lam. 3. 24. and he will never go back from it, or change his mind so as to become contented without God, and to have all his portion here in this life. Oh no, though he may go away from his Fathers house a while, and feed upon the husks that are abroad, yet he cannot be satisfied with these, for they are not bread: and as he is unsafe, so truly he is restless till he return to his Father again. His Soul remains empty till the Lord fills it; weary till the Lord satiates it; sorrowful till God himself replenish it.

5. A Saint when he falls, is *quickly brought to himself, and to his God by affliction*, his heart shews its tenderness in yielding to the stroke and impression of the Rod. *Before I was afflicted*, says the Psalmist, *I went astray, but now have I kept thy Word*, Ps. 119. 67. And truly though there may be great fears of death when affliction overtakes a Saint in his falls, yet the new nature is secretly glad of affliction, whereby the flesh may be tamed and corruption purged away. The backsliding Saint when he is stricken does not like those. *Esa. 1. 5. Revolt more and more*, but *accepts the punishment of his iniquity*, and desires to be thoroughly turned unto God who smites him: and with his Soul he wishes the sanctification of what he feels,

and that the affliction may yield the peaceable and lasting fruits of righteousness, Heb. 12. 11.

6. A Saint after he has fallen, is very much afraid of Spiritual Judgments: he is afraid lest the Lord should utterly leave him, and say concerning him; *He is proud, let him be proud still, he is filthy, let him be filthy still, he is fallen, let him alone.* David after his Sin, dreaded being cast away, and left to himself, and being given up to his own hearts lusts. *Psal. 51. 11. Cast me not away from thy presence, take not thy holy Spirit from me.* The holy Spirit had been exceedingly resisted and grieved, and had been highly and justly provoked to depart, and that for ever. But David could not bear the thoughts of being deprived of the quickning, sanctifying, comforting Spirit of God, therefore with such concern- edness he deprecates his departure.

7. If the Saints falls have been foul, he is troubled at Gods dishonour, and that he has caused his blessed name to be blasphemed: 'tis his trouble that he hath wounded his own Conscience, and this very much adds to his trouble, that he hath wounded Religion, and caused the way of Truth to be evil spoken of. To see fellow Saints grieving for his miscarriages, is the grief of his Soul, to hear prophane ones scoffing at Religion, is his shame and confusion; and to perceive them hardened
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and strengthened in their wickedness by the Sins he has fallen into, this makes his Repentance to be the greater. This was laid before David as the aggravation of his Sin, and certainly it made a deep wound in his Spirit, that *by the deed he had done, he had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme,* 2 Sam. 12. 14.

8. The Saint after his fall rises again, and begs that he may stand faster. The Sun sometimes is Eclipsed a greater part, sometimes half; and suppose it should be a total Eclipse, yet tarry a while till the Moon that interposed between the Sun and the Earth be gone, and the Sun will shine as it did before; the Saints will recover after their backslidings, and shine as light again, though Sin may darken them for a season. And when they do recover, Oh how do they cry not only for pardon, but also for cleansing and establishment. Hark unto David, Psal. 51. 10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right or a constant Spirit within me.* And vers. 12. *Uphold me with thy free Spirit.* They are importunate with God to keep them from falling any more, and to present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, Jude v. 24. To be upheld will be their joy, their exceeding joy, as their fall was their grief and trouble.

Case 12. The twelfth Case is this; *How may we know whether we grow in grace?* The Saints in Scripture are compared to Trees, because of their growth and fruitfulness: to the *Cedar* because they are so firmly rooted: to the *Palm-tree*, because *depressi resurgunt*, the weights of affliction upon them, make them grow the higher: to the *Vine*, because the fruits of righteousness which they bring forth are so exceeding pleasant: to the *Willows by the water courses*, because there is an aptness in the new creature to grow apace, if there be not some impediment. But alas these impediments are too common: and where there is life, yet there may be a languishing and withering. Growing Christians are more rare, especially in this degenerate age. Now growth in Grace may thus be known.

1. Then we grow in Grace, *when our belief of the Gospel has a stronger impression*: when things invisible are lookt upon as the greatest realities in the World, and we are affected and swayed by the view of them: When we can say with the Apostle, *that we walk by faith and not by sight*, 2 Cor. 5. 7. If things sensible do less work upon us, if we are less troubled at sensible evils, because they are light, for a moment, and work for good: if we are less taken with sensible good things, and enjoy them as if we enjoyed and possess'd them not; but

but things Spiritual and Eternal awaken our care and diligence indeed, because we believe that these are infinitely of the nearest and greatest concernment; 'tis a sign that our grace and faith has some strength, and that we resemble those Worthies, who *saw the invisible God, and declared plainly, that they sought a better Country, than was to be found in this present World, Heb. 11.*

2. Then we grow in Grace, when *our senses are exercised to discern both good and evil*: This will prove us to be of a fuller age, and that we are distinguished from such as are but Babes, *Heb. 5. 14.* This discerning both good and evil, does not only imply soundness of judgment to perceive what is truth and what is error, that truth may be held fast, and error under what form or disguise soever it comes may be rejected: but seems to have some relation to the will and affections, and the good that is to be chosen, the evil that is to be refused. When good things have a greater relish with us than formerly, and Sin grows more and more distasteful, this shews our Spiritual senses are improved. *David's* grace was much increased, when he said, *How sweet are thy words to my taste, yea, sweeter than hony to my mouth, Psal. 119. 103.* And *v. 104.* *Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way.*

3. Then we grow in Grace, when *beare Sins are quickly observed at the very first rising of them, and in a greater measure mortified.* When we are able to keep our hearts under our eye, and to check them in their very first out-leaps from God, and reduce them presently; When pride and hatred and passion, and envy cannot stir but they are instantly espied and beat down; when lust and evil concupiscence are taken notice of at the first kindling, and while in the spark, without delay quenched; this plainly shews the *Spirit to be strong*, because it does prevail against the *Flesh so quickly*: Grace is certainly grown, when Sin is nipt in the bud, & the Cockatrice in the Egg is crushed.

4. Then we grow in Grace, *when we are more weaned from the World.* The Patriarchs, *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* were grown Believers, and they confessed that they were *strangers and pilgrims upon Earth*, Heb. 11. 13. *David* also was thus got above the World, when he said, *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew, surely they are disquieted in vain, he heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them*, Psal. 39. 6. And v. 12. *I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner as all my fathers were.* The World was so little and low in *Moses's* esteem, that he prefers even *affliction with the people of God*, before *those pleasures which was but for a season*, Heb. 11. 25. And v. 26. *he esteemed the reproach*

reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. When the World is thus gotten under foot, that the worst of Christ is prefer'd before the best of the World, it argues strength of faith whereby our victory over it, is so far advanced. When we are undisturbed at changes we meet with here below, because our treasure is in Heaven and out of reach; when with the Apostle *we know how to want and how to abound*; when we are not so much concerned about earthly things, because they are not our portion: this plainly speaks an increase of grace.

5. Then we grow in Grace, *when we can readily deny our selves.* When we are not wedded to our own wills, but are yielding and *subject unto others, being clothed with humility,* 1 Pet. 5. 5. and especially we submit unto God, though his commands never so much cross our natural and carnal inclination: when we can lay our Honour, our Ease, our Wealth, our Liberty, our Lives, at the foot of Christ, to be disposed of in such a way as He may be most magnified: now certainly there is much of the *Spirit of glory and of Gods resting upon us.* How self-denying, how bold and venturous was the Apostle, desiring that *Christ might be magnified, whether it were by life or by death,* Phil. 1. 20. It argues much Grace, when the glory of God the Father and of Christ are

dearer to us than our dearest earthly comforts, and we count it gain to lose any thing for Christs sake. Oh brave *Hebrews*, who took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, knowing that they had in Heaven a better and an enduring substance, Heb. 10. 34.

6. Then we grow in Grace, when we trust in God, though outward and visible helps do fail. The Lord who made all the creatures, though he uses means, is not tied to them, but can work without, and against them: therefore though outward props fail, faith should not fail, and if it be strong, it does not. *Hab. 3. 17. 18.* *Although the Fig-trees shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the Vines: though fields do yield no food, and flocks are cut off from the fold, yet will I joy in the Lord, and rejoyce in the God of my Salvation.* The Creatures are insufficient altogether. God al sufficient though alone, and a strong faith dares trust him by himself. Nay a strong faith will rely upon him and follow him, notwithstanding repulses, denials, and discouragements. Thus the Woman of *Canaan*, holds on in petitioning our Lord, though at first he was silent, and answered not a word, though he seemed not to regard the Disciples intercession, though when he speaks to her, he compares her to a Dog, and not fit to eat the Childrens Bread; yet she gives not over, but retorts this discouragement, and

and turns it into an argument. *The Dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their Masters Table,* hereupon her petition is granted, and her faith highly commended; *O Woman great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt,* Mat. 15. 28.

7. Then we grow in Grace, *when the thoughts of God are more abiding and delightful, and our affections towards him are stronger*: the more our hearts are the Lords, the more they must needs be enriched with grace, and in a greater measure sanctified. When *David* was able to say, that the *meditation of God was sweet to him*, Psal. 104. 34. *That his Soul followed hard after God*, Psal. 63. 8. and that he thirsted for God, for the living God, as the chased Hart pants after the Brooks of Water, Psal. 42. 1, 2. This certainly did argue not only the truth of grace, but strength also.

8. Then we grow in Grace, *when we are not prone to be offended*; Stumbling argues weakness; but stumbling blocks will be got over by those whose grace is strengthened. When we hold fast the truth, though many being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from their own steadfastness, as *Athanasius, contra mundum*, stood up for the Deity and Godhead of Jesus Christ, though the World seemed to be turned *Arrian*; when persecu-
tions

tions cannot affright us from our Duty : nor others Apostasies make us dislike Religion, but we are the more stedfast, and walk more closely with the Lord : this shews that grace is much increased.

9. Then we grow in Grace, *when our fruit is really better than formerly for quality, and more for quantity.* If we bring forth more fruit than in times past, it argues us more purged. *Joh. 15. 2. Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.* When we are filled with the fruits of righteousness, as this is to the praise and glory of God, so it declares, *that he has made all grace to abound towards us, that we might abound unto every good work, 2 Cor. 9. 8.*

Case 3. The last Case is this ; *How may we understand when our joy is true and well grounded ? There is a joy of the Hypocrite : the Hearers compared unto the stony ground received the Word with joy : the Jews rejoiced in John, that burning and shining light for a season ; so that there is a great deal of false joy, which whoever entertain, they will lie down in sorrow, Esa. 50. 11. How then shall true joy be known ? To this I answer ;*

1. *True joy follows after true sorrow: they who reap in joy, do first sow in tears, Ps. 126. 5. Our Lord tells us, that the mourners are blessed for they shall be comforted, Mat. 5. 4. Rest is given to the weary and the heavy laden. That joy is sinful and utterly unseasonable, where Sin is made light of and never was lookt upon as a burthen. But if we are humble and broken, and weary of all Sin, and of all that is in Sin, desiring to be delivered from the force and filth, as well as from the guilt of it, and then are revived: we may conclude our peace is from the God of peace and comfort; for though he be the high and the lofty one who inhabits Eternity, yet he dwells with him that is of an humble and contrite Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones, Eze. 57. 15.*

2. *True joy has ever the Lord Jesus for the foundation of it. Phil. 3. 3. We rejoyce in Christ Jesus, says the Apostle: And Rom. 5. 11. If we joy in God, 'tis through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have received the atonement. The Comforter does ever glorifie Christ, so as to make us understand that all grace, mercy, and peace is given to us through a Mediatour. His sorrows have purchased pardon and salvation, and the joy of that Salvation. The Churches joy is built upon the same Rock on which the Church*

Church herself is built, and that *Rock* is Christ, therefore her consolation is the stronger.

3. True joy is *never without true holiness*. The Spirits sanctification always goes before, and ever accompanies his consolations. *Peace and righteousness do kiss each other*, where peace is of the right kind. *Rom. 14. 17. The Kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*. A true Saint if he makes bold with Sin, his joy will be lessen'd, perhaps lost; *his peace which has been spoken to him will be broken, if he return to folly*.

4. True joy is *Spiritually rational*, not an Enthusiastical business: my meaning is, there can be *good Scripture-reason* produced for it. The Spirit of God works sanctifying grace in the heart, increases that grace, and acts that grace, so that there is a powerful exercise of it, and then he does bear witness to the truth of it. The Spirit discovers unto the Soul, that he has made it *willing to receive Christ*, and to *hunger after holiness*, and willing to be the *Lords* and to *serve him in sincerity*, and to *escape the corruption that is in the World through lust*: and now his testimony of adoption is rational, and may be received as indeed the witness of the Spirit. Whereas when joys are but the fruits of stubborn and irrational impulses:

and

and the comforts of the Gospel are applied without any Scripture ground; comfortable Scriptures are not brought by the True and Good, but by the Bad and lying Spirit.

5. True joy is not a *seal unto error and delusion*: Some have fallen away from the truths of Christ, and got above his Ordinances, and cast his Word behind their backs, and despised his Blood, and yet have bragg'd of Joy. Oh the subtlety of the Evil One! As he makes use of false Teachers, false Opinions, and false Hopes: so of false joys, to ruine Souls.

6. True joy is *strength to them that have it*. Nehem. 8. 10. *The joy of the Lord is your strength*. Spiritual joy affords great ability to do the work of God, to bear Afflictions and Tribulations: and to resist and overcome the Tempter, and the World, and the lusts thereof. The joyful Christian is a man of might, he wrestles with the principalities and powers of darkness, and is too hard for them: he is discouraged at no difficulty in Religion, *he mounts up with wings as an Eagle; he runs and is not weary, he walks without fainting*, Esa. 40. ult. *he is faithful unto death*, and at last is rewarded with a *Crown of life*, Rev. 2. 10. Thus have I resolved all the Cases I propounded: I come now to the *Application*.

I be-

I begin with some *inferences* that may be drawn from this Doctrine, If this be true, that it highly concerns all to Examine and Prove themselves ; then,

1. Hence I infer the *misery of Man by nature who is in darkness* ; so that till he is enlightened from above, he is not capable of understanding himself, his condition, or his interest. Man by nature is under *the power of darkness* : of this power you read, *Col. 1. 13.* and how deliverance from it is to be valued. Darkness has a great power to keep men under Sin, to make them careless, stupid, and utterly unconcerned what becomes of them to Eternity : therefore evil Angels are styled, the *Rulers of the Darkness of this World*. Nay the Natural Man is in the abstract, called *darkness* it self. *Eph. 5. 8.* For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Now, how can he that is in darkness look into himself, or look into the Lord ? Oh the misery of dark Souls ! What unspeakable danger are they in, and their not seeing their own peril does but the more increase it. We pity a man that has sustained a breaking loss, and does not know it : a Beggar that being blind is near a precipice, and does not perceive it ; but much more compassionate is the case of the Natural Man, who neither knows himself nor the things which concern his peace.

2. Hence

2. Hence we may infer the folly of the Natural Man who is so prone to cry peace unto, and to deceive himself. He loves to go upon sure grounds in other matters, and is very serious about trifles, but wofully trifles in the weighty concerns of another World. Any thing satisfies him, and makes him securely to say, *all is well*. If Satan tell him as he did our first Parents, *that he shall not surely dye*. Satan is believed, the God of Truth and the Word of Truth being disregarded. How many when they hear the Words Curse, *do bless themselves in their hearts, and say they shall have peace, though they walk on after the imagination of their evil heart*: therefore the Lord threatens, *that his anger and jealousy shall smoke against such, and he will blot out their names from under Heaven*, Deut. 29. 19, 20.

Are they reprov'd for Sin? They say, *All are Sinners*: whereas Penitents forsake presumptuous Sins, and are willing to forsake all; but these Self-deluders, are hardly willing to forsake any. They bear up upon this, that *God is merciful*; and yet they slight and abuse his mercy, preferring their vanities and lusts before it, and go on to injure his Justice and provoke him to Jealousie. They are full of hope, because *Christ died*: and yet they thwart one great end of his Death, and will not be the better for it, for they refuse to dye to Sin, and live to Righteousness.

3. If

3. If it highly concerns all to prove themselves, hence we may infer, *what an advantage it is to enjoy the light of the Word of God.* This is a Glass that flatters none. It discovers what Sin is, and where it is. It calls Grace, Grace, and will speak peace to them that are the Sons of peace; but on the contrary, it will tell the Sinner, though he be never so high in the World, never so high in his vain hopes; *Thou art the man, that lovest and livest in thy iniquity, therefore thou art under wrath, a Son of Death and in danger of eternal damnation.* This word convinces of Sin, shews the necessity of turning unto God, and is a great means of Conversion; and afterwards by discovering of Grace, it proves the joy and rejoicing of the heart. The Unbelievers and Ungodly need this Word, and ought to prize it, for it shews them their guilt and a Mediator, their sore and also a Physician, and faith is wrought by the hearing of it, *Rom. 10. 17.* The Saints have loved this Word exceedingly; Hark how the Psalmist cries out: *Psal. 89. 15. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.*

4. Hence we may also infer *the benefit of a searching Ministry.* Seers that will see vain visions, are not worth hearing: and Prophets that prophesy only smooth things, had better prophesy.

prophecy nothing at all, for they prophesy nothing but deceit. Such Prophets are guilty of the blood of Souls, and utterly ruine them while they heal them slightly; crying peace, peace, when there is no peace; Jer. 6. 14. Such Pastors destroy the Lords Vineyard; such Dawbers are not Builders of the House of God. How sad is it when the blind lead the blind; both they that are led, and they that are the leaders fall into the bottomless pit of perdition. But a plain dealing Minister, that rebukes Sin sharply, that gives warning in time, to flee from eternal wrath: that commends himself to every mans conscience in the sight of God: that speaks as if he knew mens hearts, and discovers their secret thoughts to them; that is a Son of thunder to the wicked, and a Son of consolation to the broken hearted, and has the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to the weary, and heavy laden. Such a Shepherd is a great blessing to the Flock, ought highly to be esteemed in love for his work sake, and may be an happy instrument to save himself and them that hear him.

5. Hence we may further infer the great necessity of the Spirits aid. Unless he enlighten the eyes of our understandings we shall pass a wrong judgment upon our selves, and every thing else also. A suble Serpent, and a deceitful heart will be too hard for the most power-

ful Preacher breathing : If the Spirit of the Lord does not second and set home the word preached. The Spirit as I said before, takes the Glass of the Law, and holds it before the Sinner, that he may see therein both his heart and life ; and then, and truly not till then, he will cry out. Alas, alas ! What have I been ? What have I done ? Where am I ? And whither will my Sins at last bring me ? The Spirit can charge Sin so home, that there is no denial, no excuse made. The Sinner trembles, confesses, laments, begs pardon, consents to forsake his wickedness. Thus *Ephraim* after he was instructed, is ashamed and confounded because of his abominations. The Publican being made sensible he was a Sinner, cries out, *God be merciful !* And as the Spirit convinces the Sinner, so he discovers to the Saint, what God has given him : not only the things themselves which are great and glorious, but also the Saints interest in those things. *1 Cor. 2. 12.* Now we have received not the Spirit of this World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know those things which are freely given to us of God.

6. If it highly concerns all to prove themselves; learn hence the hatred and subtilty of *Satan* in striving men off from this duty. All his subjects are a company of inconsiderate fools, if they would but be think themselves, they

would

should become wiser than to serve such a Master. This Enemy cannot endure that wicked men should look *downward* to Hell, for fear they should be awakened and affrighted; nor that they should look *inward* into themselves, for fear they should see themselves lost, and look out for a Saviour: nor that they should look *upwards* unto God; for fear they should be converted and healed. The Devil hates Souls, therefore is unwilling that any care should be taken about them: he cannot abide that any should inquire into their Spiritual state, therefore he endeavours to divert them: he allures some with wealth, bewitches others with pleasures, intoxicates others with applause and honour; he represents Self-examination to be Self-tormenting, and holiness a meer Hell upon Earth. But in all this he shews his falshood as well as enmity. What madness is it to listen to him as a Leader and Counsellor who is both a Liar and a Murtherer!

7. Hence we may learn the great Error of the Church of Rome, in crying down Assurance, and consequently discouraging Self-examination. The Council of Trent, Sess. 6. has impiously determined and declared, *Certitudo remissionis peccatorum, est vana, & omni pietate remota fiducia.* The Saints assurance of the pardon of Sin, is a vain and ungodly confidence. How have they here blasphemed against the Comforter,

in making all his Joys and consolations, which suppose Sin to be pardon'd, altogether vain. The Scripture speaks after another manner, Gal. 4. 6. *And because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* 1 Joh. 4. 16. *We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.* 1 Joh. 3. 14. *We know that we have passed from death to life;* And v. 19. *Hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.* This assurance was not the effect of a particular and extraordinary revelation peculiar to that first age of Christianity: but was the result of those characters of Grace which are to be found even in the Saints now, as well as then. The consolations of the Spirit were not confin'd to the Primitive times, but as a Comforter he is to abide with the Church for ever, Joh. 14. 16. And indeed those who walk in the fear of God may expect the comforts of the Holy Ghost without any presumption. The Apostle bids us to *draw nigh with a true heart in full assurance of faith,* Heb. 10. 22. And 2 Pet. 2. 10. *We are commanded to give diligence to make our calling and election sure.* What impiety is it then to say, that Assurance is an impious confidence. What is it that the Church of Rome does not strike at? She strikes at our Liberties, at our Lives, would clasp the Book of the Gospel, and lock it

up in an unknown Tongue; She would baffle our very senses, and lord it over our Consciences, and exercise dominion over our Faith, and rob us of our peace and comfort, and joy in Gods Salvation.

Use 2. It may serve for a great and just lamentation, that this duty of Self-proving is so exceedingly neglected by the generality, even of those unto whom the Gospel is preached. Multitudes are as unconcerned what is likely to become of them in another World, as if there were not a pin to chuse between Heaven and Hell: as if eternal Life did not deserve to be desired, and eternal Death were not worthy of their fear. Men are willing to know whether they thrive in the World; there is anxious enquiring what the Parliament does, and what the times are likely to prove, whether peaceable and prosperous, or full of tumult and confusion. But alas, alas! 'tis no part of the enquiry of the most among us; What Eternity is likely to prove to them, whether an Eternity of horror and woe; or an Eternity of joy and blessedness. A great number live in the prophane and total neglect of God and godliness, and will not give the Gospel so much as the hearing; but truly there are also many who will pray, attend upon the Word preached, and profess high, and talk religiously, who never talk with themselves, nor call their

hearts to task, nor speak such language as this to themselves.

O animula vagula, blandula!

Quæ nunc abibis in loca?

O my Soul in what state art thou? And where art thou likely to be lodg'd, when once thou hast left this earthly Tabernacle? The consequences of this neglect of Self-examination are fatal and truly lamentable.

1. These careless Sinners that prove not themselves, *know not themselves*; they know neither their Sore nor the way of Cure, their Sins are hid from them, and so they must needs be strangers to Repentance and godly Sorrow: they remember not their own wickedness, so as to mourn and condemn themselves, therefore God will remember it so to condemn and punish them. He that is ignorant of himself must needs remain impenitent and hard-hearted, and such *do treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath*, Rom. 2. 5.

2. The not proving themselves is the ground of Sinners presumptuous confidence. False hope cannot bear a serious Trial; but they that try not themselves are full of such hopes: and such hopes the stronger, they are the more destructive. The hope of them that are Hypocrites and forget God, is compared to a *Spiders Web*, 'tis spun out of themselves, but 'tis easily cut off; and they and their Hope shall perish together,

gether, *Joh 8. 13, 14.* They that prove not themselves, in how certain danger are they of building *their house upon the sand*; And when the *Rain descends and the floods come and beat upon their house, it will fall and great will be the fall of it, Mat. 7. 27.*

3. They that prove not themselves, *bide their faces and esteem not the Lord of Life and Glory*: they feel not their sickness, they fancy they are whole, and value not the Physician; they are more afraid to be cured of their Disease than to die of it. They have no hunger, and so they slight the bread of life: they never were weary and heavy laden, and so they mind not him that alone can give them rest; they never were thirsty in a Spiritual sence, & so the invitation is not hearkned to, to come and drink of the Water of Life freely; for want of proving themselves, they know not in what a most wretched and lost condition they are; no wonder then if they neglect great Salvation, and how shall such escape?

Heb. 2. 3. When the Apostle says, *How shall we escape?* He does not say *what*, to intimate that the punishment which will follow upon neglecting the great Salvation whereof Christ is the Author, is much sorer than tongue can utter, or heart is able to conceive or reach.

4. They that prove not themselves, *know not what they are doing*, they are breaking a

Law most worthy to be kept with as great chariness as the Apple of our Eyes: they are engaged in the service of Sin whose wages is Death and Hell: they are the Devils Vassals; who hates and strives to ruine those who serve him with the greatest labour; they are *provoking the Lord more and more to anger, and provoking themselves to the confusion of their own faces.* 'Tis very bad and sad work they are employed about, and because they neither prove their work nor themselves, they do not in a penitential way cry out, *What have we done?* But what they have done, they will do still, whatever comes on't: therefore the Lord complains, *Jer. 8. 6. I hearkned and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battel.*

§. They that prove not themselves, *know not whither they are going*: these careless Sinners consider not that their most pleasant Sins will be as bitter and as deadly as the very gall of Asps at last: that of Solomon is verified in them, *Prov. 14. 12. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* The end of that broad way our Lord speaks of is hid from the multitude which go in it. They are *blind*, and

~~do not~~ see as far off; nay, though Death is near at hand, and Hell follows immediately upon Death, yet they do not see it. Woe unto them, they fly from God, and they run post haste towards ruine, and do not understand what dreadful and everlasting destruction they are near, till they have actually and utterly destroyed themselves, and that beyond remedy. Thus the rich man in the Gospel thought of nothing but taking *his ease, eating, drinking, and making merry*, till his Soul was required and lost: and he was made to feel the torment and vengeance of eternal Fire.

6. These careless Sinners who will not prove themselves, *their destruction will be sudden, unexpected, nay contrary to expectation, and so will be the more terrible.* At present they mind not what they do, but God remembers all their wickedness, Hos. 7. 2. And when he shall call them to an account for all, what horreur and confusion will seize upon them? They thought the Lord as little regarded their Sins, as they did themselves, and never expected after reckonings. When all *their good things* shall be taken away, which can last but for a short time, and eternal evils shall come in their room, when they shall find and feel themselves most miserable in the hottest lowest Hell, and that 'tis utterly impossible
that

that ever their wretched condition should be alter'd. Oh then they will curse their folly and madness, who before did bless themselves; and their foregoing presumption and security will make their pain and anguish, and despair to be the more intolerable.

Use 3. Of Direction. And there are three great things which I shall give you directions concerning.

First, How to prove your selves so as to attain unto an assurance of the love of God.

Secondly, How to prove your selves before you engage in that Ordinance of the Lords Supper.

Thirdly, How to prove and call your selves to an account every day, that you may walk with the greater circumspection.

In the first place I am to direct you, how to prove your selves so as to attain unto an assurance of the love of God. Before I come to the directions themselves, I shall lay down some Arguments to persuade all Saints to labour after this Assurance, 'tis pittie any Saint should be without it, 'tis pittie any of Gods Children should be ignorant of that most near, and blessed, and everlasting Relation, in which they stand to him. Now to make you prize assurance

assurance at an high rate, and to give all diligence to get it. Consider,

1. Assurance of the love of God, will inflame your hearts with greater love to him. What the Apostle says is remarkable, 1 *Job. 4. 19. We love him because he first loved us.* When you know that all your Debts are remitted freely, and that very much is forgiven you, you cannot chuse but have much love unto him that forgave you. *Cos amoris amor,* Love is the whetstone of love: Pray therefore for the manifestation of Gods love to you, that the light of his countenance may warm your hearts, and your Souls may love him with the greater strength and ardency. Unbelieving doubts and fears have a natural tendency to chill and damp affection, whereas when you know that you are the Children of God, you cannot but love him as incomparably the best of all Fathers.

2. Assurance of the love of God will fill you with joy and wonder. The Apostle tells us, that having received the atonement, there followed joy in God, *Rom. 5. 11. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.* Well may the assured Believer rejoice, for his name is written in Heaven: And there

there are no *Brats* in the Book of Life, no blots there made, no name ever razed out which is down there. And how may such an one wonder, that the free grace of God should make such a difference between him and others, between him and his former self! When he was first loved, he was worthy to be loathed; he was loved freely; for he was found *lying polluted in his blood*.

3. Assurance of the love of God *will take away the difficulty of Religion*. When once you know that God is yours, Christ yours, the Promises yours, things present, and to come yours, you will not think much of any thing you are required to do, or part with. Apprehension that you are *dear Children* will make you follow God indeed, *Eph. 5. 1.* and follow hard after him. Apprehension, that you are pleasant to him, will cause you to take the more pleasure in him and in his service. An assurance, that God is ready to assist you in every piece of work he enjoyns you, ready to meet you in his Ordinances, and to be found of you when you seek him, and that he will not forget your labour of love, *Heb. 6. 10.* This will make you to love your labour, for your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, *1 Cor. 15. 58.*

104. Assurance of the love of God will make earthly things contemptible in your eyes. When you know your interest in the *Fountain of living Waters*, how little will you value the *broken Cisterns*! When the Psalmist had been assured that God was his portion for ever, things on Earth became undesirable, *Psal. 73. 25, 26.* The Apostle being persuaded of his title to things invisible and eternal, he counts the things that are seen which are temporal, not worth a look from him, *2 Cor. 4. 18.* And David is so far from fancying them, that he prays he may never cast an eye or hanker after them any more. *Psal. 119. 37.* Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way. They that know and believe the love which God hath to them, are satisfied, that his love hath provided far better things than the World can boast of, or the men of the World know of. Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love him, *1 Cor. 2. 9.* Those believing Souls that were in assured expectation of a better Country than any in this World, to wit, an Heavenly Country, they confessed they were Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth, *Heb. 11. 13.* Earth, and the things of the Earth, were very mean and inconsiderable in their eyes.

5. Assurance of the love of God will be a mighty antidote and preservative against temptation: with what confidence will it make you to look unto your Lord and Father for help against the Tempter, and his grace will be sufficient for you, 2 Cor. 12. 9. so that you shall be strong enough to resist the Devil, and make him flee from you. The Assured Believer can more easily silence Satan than others can, because he has tasted and seen how good and gracious the Lord is: he has experienced that peace, in the God of love and peace, which the World can neither give, nor take away; therefore he does the more contemn all the offers which Satan can make to him in the hour of temptation. The assured Believer may cry out, *Edomus, iudomus* Now I have found real contentment; now I have tasted true joy, Earth cannot yield it, Sin is the sure hindrance of it, in God alone 'tis to be found. Temptation upon such an one is likely to have but small success.

6. Assurance of the love of God will lift you up above the fear of evil tidings. Psal. 112. 7. *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord.* Why should those be afraid, who dwell in the secret place of the most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty? Psal. 91. 1. The Saint has the Al-

mighty

mighty on his side, who surely is able to protect him. He is under the shadow of the Almighty, the Lord with his wings does cover him; that violence may not be offered to him; nay, he abides under this Shadow, so that he is safe at all times. He dwells in the Most High, and who then can reach him? Nay, he dwells in the secret place of the most High, which shews how precious he is in Gods account, and how far out of harms way. Single David supposes an whole Host encamped against him; yet says, his heart shall not fear, *Psal. 27. 3.* and knowledge of his interest in God is the ground of his confidence; *vers. 1. The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid?*

7. Assurance of the love of God will make you very holy and heavenly. The Grace of God is but presumed upon and abused when 'tis made an encouragement unto licentiousness. Hark to the Apostle, *Rom. 6. 1, 2. What shall we say then, shall we continue in Sin that grace may abound? God forbid, how shall we that are dead to Sin, live any longer therein? Those who know they are under Grace do most abhor the dominion of Sin, v. 14. they live most to God, and are most forward to be the Servants of Righteousness. The Conversion of* such

such will be much *in Heaven*, Phil. 3. 20. The Heir in his minority does often think of the Estate he is to enjoy. Those who know they are the Children of God will often think of what they are to partake of hereafter: for they are Heirs of God and joint Heirs with Christ, *they are begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*, 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. No contemplation will be so delightful to us, as that of Heaven, when once we know, *that our Lord is gone to prepare a place for us, and will come again and receive us to himself, that where he is we may be for ever also.*

8. Assurance of the love of God will make you to abound in praises. He has made you new creatures to this very end, that you should *show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. How does the Apostle Peter break out into thanksgiving upon this account, 1 Pet. 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again.* The Apostle Paul speaks to the same purpose, Eph. 1. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ.*

Prove your own selves.

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He hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we should be Holy, and without blame before him in Love: He hath predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children. He hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of sins according to the Riches of his Grace. How much has the Lord wrought both in, and for those he has made Believers! He has abounded towards them in Wisdom, in Grace, in Power, in Love; Praise is a debt, Praise is expected; and Praise is comely: Though all his Works praise the Lord, yet Saints look upon themselves as under a more special and peculiar obligation, to magnifie and blesse his Name.

9. Assurance of the Love of God, will make Afflictions tolerable, nay Death it self desirable. The bitterest Cup will down more easily when you see, tis reached forth to you by the hand of a Father. The curse of the Cross is gone, and it may be the better born, and the Sting of Death is taken out, and now Death and the Grave may be triumphed over. What was Death to old *Simon* when his Eyes had seen Gods salvation, it was but a peaceable departure out of a troublesome World, Luk. 1. 29. 30. What was Death

to the Apostle Paul who knew, that as soon as ever *he was absent from the Body he should be present with the Lord?* It was not dreadful, but desirable, *Phil. 1. 23. I desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better.* These are the Arguments (and are they not strong ones?) to perswade you to labour after Assurance.

The Directions how to prove your selves, so as to attain this Assurance follow.

1. Set selves as *in the presence of the All-seeing and Heart searching God.* Who knows you, who will judge you, and who alone can make you to know your selves. You cannot possibly deceive him, for *every Creature is manifest in his sight, all things are naked and open to his view. Heb. 4. 13.* Your Spirits will be apt both to trifle and to juggle, unlesse they are awed with a sense of the Lords Omniscience. Let Conscience in the searching of you act as Gods Officer, and as Gods Officer in Gods presence, and then it will deal the more faithfully.

2. Pray that *your Spirits may give a true Testimony concerning you.* And that they may do so ; you must be well acquainted with Scripture-signs and characters of true Grace, and then with great intention reflect upon your selves, to see whether you have the marks of Christs sheep upon you, whether you have the characters of Gods Children. A wrong judgment of your selves how extreamly prejudicial would it be to you : Adjure your Spirits therefore in the name of the Lord to tell you the very Truth ; and cry unto the Lord himself, that he would not suffer you to fancy or call your selves his Children, if you are really but hypocrites and strangers to him, that you may not cry *peace and safety* ; when God speaks just the contrary.

2. Be willing to find out every thing that is evil in you, in order to your more compleat purging. David prays, *see if there be any evil way in me, and lead me in the way Everlasting,* Psal. 139. 24. And Psal. 19. 12. He desires to be cleansed from secret sins, that nothing wicked might borrow the shape of lawful and good, and thereby abide in him.

The more corruption is found out and mortified, the more fruitful you will be, John 15. 2. *Every branch that beareth fruit*

fruit he purgeth it that it, may bring forth more fruit. And the more fruitful you are, the more evident it will be that you are really the living branches of the true Vine, which is Christ Jesus.

4. Pray hard, *That if you have any Grace, the Lord would increase it, and bring it into exercise, that it may be the more apparent.* Little Grace is nearest unto no Grace, much Grace is nearer unto Glory. When Grace lies dormant as it were and asleep in the Habit, it may be doubted of, but when 'tis vigorously acted, the Truth of it will more easily be granted. Thus the Hare when she sits close is not perceived, but when she is started then she is visible to all. Pray therefore to resemble the *Thessalonians whose Faith did grow exceedingly, and whose Love abounded.* 2 *Thef.* 1. 3. And that your Faith may work, and your Love put you upon labour, this is the way to have your spiritual estate cleared up to you.

5. Find out and avoid what really nourishes and keeps up your Doubts and Fears. Entertain not high Thoughts of your selves, your gifts, your parts, your attainments; for deadness, and darkness, and doubting will follow upon spiritual pride. Check the
Spirit

Spirit in you which lusteth unto Envy, Jam.

4. 5. Abhor all lascivious thoughts and motions at the first rising of them. Let not any Earthly enjoyment get too high a room in your Heart, nor too large a share in your Affections. Suffer not your Spirits to be ruffled and disordered by passion and peevishness. In short connive at no corruption, but *mortifie all your members upon Earth, Col. 3. 5.* Not sparing the right Hand, or right Eye. For if you deal gently with any of your lusts, and suffer them ever an anon to prevail, they will render your condition doubtful, and will be a strong impediment unto Assurance and Consolation.

6. When you are proving your selves *heed not Satan in his unreasonable injections.* You need not doubt but this Accuser of the Brethren will be very busie, and use many wiles to hinder you from attaining peace of Conscience. The Christians comfort which is the Christians Heaven upon Earth, is the Hell and Torment of this envious Spirit; therefore he does what he can to hinder it.

He starts a great many captious questions, in the minds of Humbled and Awakened ones. How do you know *but that you are of the number of the not Elected?* Is not the

day of Grace past, and the spirit quite gone? Are you not judicially blinded and hardened? Can you ever hope for an interest in, and sense of the Love of God, who have been such rebels heretofore, and such revolters and back-sliders, since a profession of Religion? Sometimes this Enemy of souls will charge those that are sincere with hypocrisie in a most peremptory manner; he tells them *that all their duties are a meer Abomination, that they have not one jot of saving Faith, that they are meer strangers unto godly sorrow and repentance; that they have nothing at all of the Love of God in them.* [*Calumniare audacter aliquid hærebit,*] Satan charges boldly, and thereby hopes something will stick, whereby the soul will be disquieted. But such injections as these are not to be regarded; because they come from him that is called a *Liar*; and it may be known they proceed from him, because he proves not what he injects by Scripture; nay he overlooks all that the Scripture speaks for the souls encouragement: And his design in these injections is to make duty neglected, to drive souls to despair; and to lay aside the profession and practice of Religion. Be altogether deaf to Satan perceiving his evil design, and pray *that the God of peace would bruise Satan under your feet, Rom. 16. 20.*

7. *Add not unto the Word of God,* Prov. 30. 6. My meaning is this, beleive nothing either for or against your selves but according to the written Word of God, rightly understood and applyed. Many question their state, because their Hearts are so dead in Prayer ; because they find so much hardness and unaffectedness under Ordinances, Mercies, Afflictions ; because they fall so exceeding short of what they would fain both be and do. But where does the Word tell you, that where there is true Grace *all* deadness and hardness of Heart is removed? Or that none are real Saints but who are *absolutely perfect* in Holiness? The Apostle Paul found *evil present with him when about to do that which is good,* Rom. 7. 21. And the beleiving *Galatians*, had flesh as well as spirit, and this flesh was very active, and *lusted against the spirit so that they could not do the things which they would have done,* Gal. 5. 17. You have spiritual life, else you would not have spiritual sense to feel and be weary of remainders of corruption ; you would not have a will to be, and do good ; and still to be and do better ; if *God had not wrought will this in you.*

8. Be sure *not to thrust away that consolation, which the Word of God hands forth to you, but humbly and thankfully accept it.* Though the Heart be naturally deceitful above all things, yet so far as 'tis renewed it deals truly and sincerely, and Conscience being enlightned by the Word of God, is to be credittd in its Testimony, *1 Job. 3. 21. Beloved if our Heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* If therefore upon the strictest search your Hearts do witness for you *that there are good things in you towards God,* as it was said concerning *Akijah the Son of Jeroboam, 1 King. 14. 13.* If you find that God is preferred before the World; that you are willing to receive the Son as the way to the Father, and that you consent, nay earnestly desire to be sanctified throughout by the Spirit. You should not dispute against your comfort, but gladly accept of the peace of the Gospel, for you are the Sons of peace. You will grieve the Spirit of God, and add to your own grief, if you will not heed the Scripture speaking plainly for you, and for your relief, *and if your Souls refuse to be comforted, Ps. 77. 2.* Take heed of rash answers of your selves that you are rank Hypocrites, and that all the grace you have is but common

or counterfeit ; unbeleif is not to decide, but the Word is to judge concerning the sincerity of Grace, and if the Word speak peace you are not to keep your selves under trouble.

9. Hold on in *self-proving and praying*, and resolve never to give over trying and crying tell you know you are the Lords, and have the light of his Countenance. Tell him that his favour is better then life : and that you know not how to *live*, much less do you know how to *dye*, without the sence of his Love,

Be thankful for hopes and probabilities, but rest not there, till you can speak as the Spouse in the *Canticles*, Chap. 6. 4. *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, And as the Apostle Paul does, Gal. 2. 20. *The Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me*. Beg that the Spirit may put all out of question, and *seal you to the day of Redemption*. The Spirits Testimony is of absolute necessity, to bring us to an Assurance that we are the Children of God. Now this Testimony of the Spirit supposes that we are *convinced of Sin and Righteousness* ; it also supposes, that we are sanctified in Heart and Life, in a degree ; and long for per-

perfect Holiness. The Spirit then heightens the actings of Grace, and evidences the Change he has wrought, and makes us plainly to perceive, and feel that we hate our sin, prize our Redeemer, and Love, and Fear, and Desire after our God: And this real change in our Heart being evidenced, then our relation unto God is also shewn; that we are the Children and Heirs of the Lord Almighty, that his love to us is Everlasting, and his kindness shall never depart from us. Satans mouth is now stopt, and the Spirit causes the Conscience from the Word to be quieted and satisfied; clouds are scattered, doubts and fears are removed, consolation is strong, and joy unspeakable and glorious. Thanks! millions of Thanks be unto God, for the *Mighty Comforter*! Who gives a check to Hell, and says, *Let their be Light and Joy*, where before there was darkness and doubting, and sorrow: Who evidences Electing Love from Everlasting, and causes Triumph and Rapture of Spirit, in assured expectation of glory to Everlasting!

10. Let me add one Word more, having attained Assurance of the Love of God, *Take the right course to keep what you have gotten.*

Here

Here I shall name a few particulars.

1. *Be low in your own Thoughts*, if you continue *humble*, God will continue to *revive* and comfort you, *Esa. 57. 15.*

2. *Offer unto your God and Father Thanksgiving.* If you are thankful for the light of his countenance, thats the way to have his face still to shine upon you.

3. Take heed of *presumptuous sins*, David lost his joy when he ventured to be unclean and bloody, nay take heed of *lesser sins*, for these will dead the Heart, grieve the Holy Ghost, and dispose to greater.

4. Be very serious *in the Ordinances of Christ*; if the House, if the Table of the Lord be neglected, you will kill your comfort; frequent the *Lords Temple*, if you would see his *Beauty*, that is, his glorious holiness, and have a continued sense of his Love, *Psf. 27. 4.*

5. Study the *unchangeableness of Gods Love in Christ*, and the *sureness of his Covenant*: This will be matter of perpetual gladness, to see your selves in the Heart, and hands of the
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the Father, and of Christ; from whose love none *can separate you*, *Rom. 8. ult.* out of whose hands none *can pluck you*, *Joh. 10. 28, 29.*

6. Walk continually in *the fear of God*. This is the way to have the Spirits Consolations, *Acts 9. 31.* Then had the Churches rest throughout Judea, and Samaria, and Galilee, and were edified, and walking in the Fear of God and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

7. Use *this World as not abusing it*, *1 Cor. 7. 31.* If you are too much taken with worldly comforts, your spiritual ones will abate; but if in reference to earthly things you *rejoice as if you rejoyced not*, your joy in the Lord will be the greater. Look upon your selves as strangers, and that this present World is but the House of your Pilgrimage, then Gods statutes will be your Songs, and fill you with the greater joy, *Psal. 119. 54.*

8. Husband *your time to the best advantage*, and have the end of time in your eye, *Dye daily*, *1 Cor. 15. 31.* If you think much of your dissolution, it will make you so wise as to keep your Evidence for Heaven

ven clear, and to take heed of blotting them, that you may have them to shew when stepping into Eternity.

In the second place, I am to direct you how to *prove your selves before you engage in that Ordinance of the Lords Supper.*

To come to the Lords Table is a duty which Christ commanded when he was *dying*. And if the words of a Dying Father, or of adying Friend, are remarked and remembered, how much more the command of a dying Redeemer! The circumstance of time is very observable, which the Apostle mentions, 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24. *The same night in which he was betrayed the Lord Jesus took the Bread and break it, to set forth his own being bruised and wounded, killed for the Transgressions of his People. He bids his Church Do this that they might remember what He their Head had suffered for them.* When the Pass-over was instituted, and was eaten at Evening, and the Children of Israel were brought out of the Land of *Ægypt*, out of the House of Bondage. *Moses says, It was a Night much to be observed unto the Lord, Exod. 12. 42.* Oh! How much more is that

that time to be observed when Our Lord Jesus wrought a far greater and more glorious Redemption and Deliverance, when being himself *delivered for our offences and raised again for our Justification*, he saved his Church from the Wrath of God, the Devils power, the Dominion of sin, the sting of Death, and the vengeance of Eternal Fire. Upon the first day of the week Christ *ceased from his own works, as God did from his*, upon the seventh day of the week: There remaineth therefore (the Greek Word is *σάββατος*) a Sabbath or rest unto the People of God, Heb. 4. 9, 10.

This Ordinance of the Supper is in no wise to be Administred unto all, though they be never so ungodly. We are indeed to *Preach the Gospel to every Creature*, but there must be at least a *professed subjection to the Gospel*; or else persons are not to be admitted to this Holy and Heavenly Banquet. Those who are for Railing in the Communion Table, I wish they were for a Spiritual Rail of Scripture Discipline; and that in the Administration of these sacred Mysteries, there were a separation made *between the Precious and the Vile*. In the more pure and ancient times, two sorts of Persons were debarred from the Lords Table,

ble, the *Catechumeni* and the *Lapsi*, the ignorant and not well instructed in the Faith; and those who had fallen into scandalous sins. And why should either of these be admitted now, *to eat and drink Judgment to themselves?*

To prevent the incurring of the *guilt* instead of receiving the benefits of the Blood of Christ, the Apostle prescribes self-examination.

Now, That he who would be a welcome Guest at the Lords Table, may prove himself thorowly and to purpose; let him seriously and as in the Presence of God propose unto himself these following Questions.

1. Am I acquainted with or a stranger to the great things of the Gospel? Do I know the *Mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ?* Or is the black vail of ignorance still upon my Heart? The Apostle speaks of some who have need to be taught which are the first principles of the Oracles of God, Heb. 5. 12. And am not I one of that number? How can I pretend to Faith in Christ or Love to God, if I have not so much as a notional knowledge of either?

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The Communicant must have *some Knowledge* of the fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Faith. Here for his better Information I shall lay down Ten Principles, which 'tis highly requisite he should be acquainted with.

1. The Communicant must know, That *there is a God who is from Everlasting to Everlasting and every where present, a Spirit of incomprehensible Wisdom, Power, Righteousness and Goodness, the Maker and Governor of Heaven and Earth, and all the Creatures which are therein*, Heb. 11. 6. Psal. 90. 1. Jer. 13. 23. Job. 4. 24. Rom. 16. ult. Ps. 147. 5. Psal. 116. 5. Gen. 2. 1. Dan. 4. 34, 35.

2. This God is but One, and yet he is distinguished into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which have the same Godhead, Power, and Eternity, 1 Job. 5. 7. Matth. 28. 19. 1 Joh. 5. 20. Heb. 9. 14. Act. 5. 4. This Doctrine of the Trinity is revealed, that we may have right conceptions of the True God when we Worship him. Excellent is that passage of Nazianzen, Orat. 40. *Ἐἰς τὸ ἄγιον Βάπτισμα. Οὐ φθάσω τὸ ἐν νοήσεσι καὶ τοῖς τελετῇ περιλαμβάνομαι. Οὐ φθάσω τὰ ἅγια διελθεῖν καὶ εἰς τὸ ἐν ἀναρίσσει.* I am not able to understand

derstand One, but I am presently struck with the brightness of Three : I am not able to distinguish Three, but I am presently brought back to One again. We are also further to take notice how all these Three Persons in the glorious Godhead do concur in that great Salvation, which is brought to light and offered in the Gospel. The Father sends the Son to become Man and Mans Saviour ; the Son is made Flesh, and puts away sin by the Sacrifice of himself. The Spirit is sent to convince men of sin, and of their need of this Saviour, and to draw them to him, that beleiving in him they may not perish but have Everlasting Life.

3. The Communicant must know ; That Man was at first made upright. The first Man Adam had his Makers Image when first he was made, which Image did consist in Knowledge, Righteousness, and Holiness, and in having Dominion over the Creatures. A Covenant was made with Adam of Life and Immortality, upon condition of perfect Obedience, which then he had Power if he would to yield ; and he was threatned with Death if he did Eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good

and Evil, Eccles. 7. ult. Gen. 1. 26.
 Ephes. 4. 24. Col. 3. 10. Rom. 10. 5.
 Gen. 2. 17.

4. The first man *Adam* being a publick person, and representing his whole Posterity, did sin against God in Eating the forbidden Fruit; and all his posterity, (Immanuel excepted, who being conceived by the Holy Ghost was Born of a Virgin) sinned in him, and are Fallen short of the Glory of God, so that all are Born the Children of Wrath, all have corrupted Natures, so that they are Reprobate to every thing that is Good, and strongly inclined unto Evil, in Thought, Word, and Deed, and every sin being a Transgression of the Holy Law of the great God, the Desert and Wages of it is no less then Death and Hell.
 Rom. 5. 14. Gen. 3. 6. Rom. 5. 12.
 Rom. 3. 23. Luke 1. 35. Ephes. 2. 3.
 Gen. 6. 5. 1 Joh. 3. 4. Rom. 6. ult.

5. Jesus Christ the Eternal Son of God did take mans Nature upon him, but was perfectly free from Sin; and suffered in that Nature becoming Obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross, and his Blood is sufficient being the Blood of him that is God and Man, to cleanse from sin, and to make peace, and he is
 able

able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him, neither is there Salvation in any other, Heb. 2. 16. Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8. Act. 20. 28. 1 Job. 1. 7. Col. 1. 20. Heb. 7. 25. Acts 4. 12.

6. The Communicant must know, That Christ after his Death and Burial, did rise again the third day, which shewed that the price he paid for his Churches Redemption was sufficient; and having Forty days conversed upon Earth, with his Disciples, and been seen of several other Witnesses, even Five Hundred Brethren at once, at length he did Ascend into Heaven, and is at the Right Hand of God, to make Intercession for them that Believe in him; and from Heaven where he now is, He shall be at last revealed with Power and great Glory, to Judge the World in Righteousness, Rom. 4. ult. 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4, 5, 6. Luk. 24. 51. Rom. 8. 34. 2 Thess. 1. 7. Matth. 25. 31. Acts 17. 31.

7. Christ has three Offices Prophetical, Priestly, and Kingly; As a Prophet he does Teach his Church; and who teacheth like him? As a Priest he has made satisfaction, and does intercede for them: And as a King

he does Govern and Defend them. And this Church of his are Called, Justified, Sanctified, and shall be Saved: And though Earth and Hell hate them, yet there shall be somewhere or other, a Church of Christ always unto the end of the World. Acts 3. 22. Heb. 4. 14. Heb. 10. 14. Rev. 19. 16. Ps. 3. ult. Rom. 8. 30. 1 Cor. 6. 11. Matth. 28. ult.

8. The Communicant must know, That the Holy Ghost did move and inspire the Penman of the Holy Scripture, so that 'tis of Divine Authority, and contains all things needful to be known, beleived, and done; in order to Salvation: The Books of the Old and New Testament are to be received as the Word of God. Those therefore that lived under the Old Testament had some Knowledge of Christ and the Gospel; and were saved no other way but by him: But under the New Testament, Christ and the things of our peace are much more fully revealed, 2 Pct. 1. ult. 2 Tim. 3. 16. Ps. 19. 7. 2 Tim. 3. 17. Eph. 2. 20. Acts 26. 22, 23. Matth. 13. 17. 2 Cor. 3. 18.

9. There is a New Covenant which God has made with his people who Repent and Believe,

leave, into which Covenant he has also taken their Infant Seed, and therein he has promised to be their God, to pardon Sin, to give Graces after Death to raise them up at the Last day; and to bestow upon them Life Everlasting, and this Covenant as it was under the Old Testament confirmed by Circumcision and the Passover, so under the New, 'tis confirmed by Baptism and the Lords Supper, which two Sacraments are the Seals of it, Heb. 8. 8. 10. 12. Acts 3. 19. Acts 16. 31. Acts 2. 39. Joh. 6. 39. 40. Rom. 6. ult. Rom. 4. 11. 1 Cor. 5. 7. Matth. 28. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 24, 25. 1 Cor. 10. 16.

10. The Communicant must know, That the Law of God is not Abolished but Established by Faith as a Rule of Righteousness for Christians to walk by. And sincere Obedience to the Law and Gospel through Christ shall be Accepted and Rewarded; but those who live and dye Unbelieving, Impenitent, and Disobedient, shall suffer the Vengeance of Eternal Fire; and their Condemnation will be sorest, who have been often offered, but have neglected great Salvation, Rom. 3. ult. 1 Joh. 2. 1. 1 Cor. 15. 58. 1 Pet. 2. 5. 2 Thess. 1. 8. 9. Heb. 2. 3.

These are the Ten Principles of the Christian Religion which the Communicant is to Catechize himself about. There must be *Light* in the Head, that is of absolute necessity, though it be not sufficient ; for there must be also *Grace* in the Heart, to qualifie a man for the Lords Supper.

2. The Communicant should further examine and ask himself this question. *Do I apprehend the danger of unworthy Receiving ?* Is not the guilt of Blood heavy ? And what is it then to be guilty of the Blood of God ? But if *I Eat and Drink unworthily I am guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord,* 1 Cor. 11. 27. What a fearful thing is it to Crucifie the Son of God afresh ? To trample him under Foot, and to esteem his Blood a common and an unholy thing ? My Heart rises against the Jews because they Mocked, Scourged, Buffeted, Crucified the Lord of Life and Glory ; but this they did in his Humiliation here upon Earth. And shall I dare to put an affront upon him, now he is at the right Hand of the Almighty Majesty on High ? If I Eat and Drink unworthily I pull the Blood
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of Christ upon my Head instead of having my sin pardoned, and my Heart cleansed and sanctified by it, and I Eat and Drink my own damnation.

3. Another question the Communicant should propound to himself is this; *Have I a right conception of Gospel Worthiness?* The Worthiness spoken of in the Gospel, does not imply any Merit or Desert, for Christ the Son is given out of the Transcendent Love of God, and *with him freely all things, Rom. 8. 32.* The Patriarch Jacob Acknowledged he could not lay claim to the least of all Mercies, as a due debt. Our daily Bread is a Gift, and how much more the Bread of Life? Worthiness therefore is as much as *being disposed and made meet* to Receive what the Lord in the Supper is willing to bestow. When we are sensible of our own unworthiness, and guilt, and vileness, then we are made meet to be accepted; looking unto the Beloved, and to be Justified by his Meritorious Righteousness: When we are sensible how weak and empty and distempered our Hearts are, then we are Worthy, that is to say, made meet to be strengthened and filled, and healed by

the great Physitian of Souls, in whom *it hath pleased the Father all fulness should dwell.*

4. The Communicant should ask himself. *Do I look upon admission to the Table of the Lord as a mighty privilege?* He was no less then a King of Israel, who thought it a great favour to be *a doorkeeper in the House of God*, and what is it then to be a welcome guest at his Table? What is it to be *brought into his Banqueting House where the Banner over his People is love, Cant. 2. 4.* Our Lord in this Ordinance deals forth Light and Grace, and Comfort bountifully. Here Tears have been dried up, fainting Souls have been revived, and Faith ready to fail hath been strengthened, and languishing Hope hath been made lively. The Blood of Jesus Christ being applied, has proved a *παρακατα* medicine for every malady, and hath sent away the sin distressed Soul, both clean and calm, both pure and also peaceable. Is it not a mighty advantage, and an Heart effecting and endearing sight, to see the Blood and the Love of Christ streaming forth together? Here is *ἀγάπη ἡ ὑπερβαλλουσα* Love that passeth knowledge, *Eph. 3. 19.* Oh with what confidence may humble and hungry souls go to this Jesus who

who is so full of Love, and so full of all besides which they Hunger after, he would have none to content themselves with a little ; but his language is, *Eat O Friends, Drink yea, Drink abundantly O Beloved.* Cant. 5. 1.

5. The Communicant should ask himself, *Do I know what it is to discern the Lords Body?* 1 Cor. 11. 29. My bodily Eye beholds the Sacramental Bread and Wine, but have I an Eye to behold something further and better ? If the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, did behold an Healer and a Saviour when *Moses* lifted up the Brazen Serpent ; if the Beleivers under the Old Testament, did see a *Messiah* in the legal sacrifices ; though as yet he was not manifested in the Flesh ; surely since the Son of God is come, and has been actually offered up to bear the sins of many ; shall I not behold this Jesus in the Bread and Wine broken and poured out ; where he is so evidently set forth as Crucified ?

What is it to discern the Lords Body ? Verily 'tis to look beyond the outward Elements to the Body and Blood of Christ which thereby are represented ; and to relye upon

upon that very Jesus who was Crucified without the Gates at *Jerusalem*, for the Pardon and Mortification of *our* iniquities in particular; and that our wants of Grace and Strength, and Comfort, may be supplied out of his superabundant fulness. Moreover the Beleiver should grow confident, and be perswaded, that as really as the Bread and Wine are given him; so really Christ bestowes himself, and his benefits upon him, in this Blessed Ordinance. Hark to the Apostle, 1 Cor. 10. 16, *The cup of Blessing which we bless is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we brake, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ?*

6. The Communicant should ask himself, *Do I see my self lost in my self, and do I perceive 'tis in vain to hope for Redemption any other way but by the Lord Jesus?* The Apostle has a notable expression when he speaks of being *shut up unto Faith*, Gal. 3. 23. intimating that all other doors are shut against the Sinner; only the door of Faith in Jesus Christ is open. We cannot reasonably hope for the Forgiveness of sin, or Justification before God any other way but by him, who is sufficient to be *a propitiation for the sins*

sins of the whole World. There were multitudes of sacrifices under the old Law, which were appointed by the Lord himself: and yet the sins of the Sacrificers could be done away by none of them: The Apostle tells us plainly, that 'tis impossible the Blood of Bulls and Goats should take away sin, Heb. 10. 4. And if the sacrifices that were of Divine institution could not do it; surely those of humane invention could do it lesse, though never so costly, though we should give our first Born for our Transgression, the Fruit of our Body for the sin of our Soul, Mic. 6. 7.

No active Obedience that we can yeild, can justifie us before God, for the Apostle peremptorily asserts that there is *no Law given, which can give Life unto him* that obeys it, Gal. 3. 21. Nay further our greatest sufferings for Righteousness sake, are insufficient to be our justifying Righteousness. Therefore those who come out of great Tribulation, are said to have *washed their Robes*, not in their own Blood, though that was spilt for the Word of God, and the Testimony of Jesus Christ, but *in the Blood of the Lamb*, Rev. 7. 14.

7. The Communicant should examine and ask himself, *Am I perswaded that Jesus who dyed upon the Cross, is able to save to the uttermost and willing to save all that come to him?* Jesus is the man who is Gods Fellow, he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, *Psal. 2. 6.* He is indeed the true God and Eternal Life, *1 John 5. 20.* Certainly then Help is laid upon One that is mighty and that has sufficient power to save. Jesus is he who was fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World, *1 Pet. 1. 20.* And pitcht upon in Gods purpose and decree to be the Redeemer of lost Man, and at last he was made manifest; having been Typified and Beleived in long before. He undertook to be Mans Surety, and to pay the price for his Redemption. And just when he was dying he cryes out *τετέλεσται*, *It is finished*, and then gave up the Ghost, *John 19. 30.* As if he had said, *I undertook to satisfie Divine Justice* that had been wronged, and to appease the Anger of God which had been provoked by the sin of man; *I undertook to remove the Curse of the Law*, to conquer and Redeem from Death and Hell; and quite to spoil the Principalities and Powers of Darknes, *I undertook to*
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Ransom precious Souls that were lost; and Purchase a Church, that may come at last to live with me and my Father, and shout forth Hallelujahs unto Him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever! And this great work which I undertook I have now finished.

Doubtlesse the Lord Jesus is able to save, and his willingness he declares abundantly. The Communicant should thus argue with himself. *O! My soul! Is not Jesus a Merciful High Priest as well as a Mighty Saviour? Behold him Weeping over Jerusalem, the Inhabitants whereof were Enemies to him, and would not be gathered: And wishing they had known the things of their Peace; and will he not with Joy receive those that come to him, and put their Trust under the shadow of his Wings? Hark does he not say, I will give rest to the weary and heavy laden? Does he not assure thee, that those that come to him, he will in no wise cast out? What though thou art utterly unworthy; Christ saves none but such, for 'tis his design that they may cry, Grace, Grace, forevermore.*

8. The Communicant should ask himself, *Do I look upon the New Testament and Covenant,*

venant, whereof Jesus is the Mediator as sure and Everlasting? David speaks excellently concerning this, 2 Sam. 23. 5. God hath made with me an Everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure; this is all my Salvation and all my desire. This Covenant is ordered in all things, because the Promises of it are so admirably suited unto the necessities of poor sinners. The Lord here Promises Mercy to the Miserable; Pardon to the Guilty; Cleansing to the Defiled; Healing to the Distempered Soul; Liberty to the Captives; Light to the Blind; Rest to the Weary; Satisfaction to Empty; Strength to the Weak; Establishment to the Wavering; and Salvation to the Lost: And because all things else are insufficient to make them happy, the Lord Promises that he himself will be their God, their Father, their Portion, and that forever and ever. And what more can be desired? Now this Covenant is as sure as the Word, the Oath, the Seal, the Truth, the Power, the Love, the Blood of God can make it.

This Covenant is sometimes styled a Testament, and in this Testament Christ has bequeathed the greatest things unto Believers,

leivers, here we find the richest Legacies that ever were left. The favour of God, the Sanctifying Spirit, a New Heart, Peace of Conscience, Joy unspeakable, the good things of this present World, Grace to persevere to the end, and a farr more exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory hereafter, are the things bequeathed by our dying Lord. And the Testatour having dyed, the Testament is of force, and stands firm and fast forever, Heb. 9. 15, 16, 17. O my Soul! should the Communicant then say, *Set thy self to Study the Covenant of thy Lord. Consider how great things are made over, and how firm the settlement is! Be pacified, O! My conscience with the promises of Pardon. Embrace O my very Heart, the Promises of purity, that by these I may be made a partaker of the Divine Nature, and escape the Corruption that is in the World through lust: Rejoice, O! My Soul, in this highest Happiness that God in Christ is Thine! And Triumph, O! My Spirit in hope of that Glory that most certainly and very shortly is to be Revealed!*

9. The Communicant should examine and ask himself. *Am I willing to break the League Eternally between my Heart and my Lusts? Do I consent to have all the deeds*
of

of the Body mortified without exception ? Under the Law the Inticerto Idolatry was to be destroyed how neer soever. *If thy Brother or thy Son, or Daughter or the Wife of thy Bosom, or thy Friend which is as thy own Soul, intice thee secretly, saying, Let us go after other Gods and serve them, thou shalt not consent nor hearken to him, but thou shalt surely kill him, thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to Death, and after the Hand of all his People, Dent. 13. 6. 8,9. And the reason is assigned, v. 10. Because he sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God.* There is never a sin or lust which thou canst indulge, but the tendency of it is to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God. No sin therefore upon any account is to be spared. Search thy self therefore for corruption is a lurking thing. Unfeignedly desire to have all this old Leaven purged out, that thou mayst be fit to feed on Christ the Pasle-over.

Speak thus : *O ! My Heart ! At last lay aside thy deceitful dealing, and tell me truly as thou wilt answer it another day, whether love to sin is turned into hatred? Dost thou give consent that thy pride, thy passion, thy unclean affections, thy love of the World, and all other*

Prove your own selves.

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other sins should be Crucified? Dost thou slight sinful delights, that thou mayest taste the pleasantness and peace, which is in Wisdoms wayes? Dost thou esteem Godliness to be greater gain; then any wickedness can yeild? Oh! cherish none of thy iniquities, for one sin allowed, will make the Supper, and all other Ordinances ineffectual to Salvation, and prove thy utter and Eternal Ruine. Just as one Dagger thrust into the Heart, will dispatch a man as certainly, as if he had as many wounds given him as *Cesar* in the Senate, or *Attilius Regulus* in the nailed Barrel.

10. The Communicant should ask himself, Have I a spiritual Appetite, do I hunger and thirst after Righteousness? Mat. 5. 6. Do I count Holiness the Glory of God, and the truest Glory of Man? Do I see a deformity in wickedness, and an excellency in being Righteous? Do I desire to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that New man which after God is created in Righteousness, and true Holiness? Eph. 4. 24. Are my prejudice against Holiness removed, as if I were unwise, uneasie, needless, and a thralldom to be Holy? O my Soul, what doest thou long for, when thou comest unto thy Lords Banquet? Is it not

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that thy Faith may be strengthened? that thy love to God may be more hot and flaming? Is it not that thy fear may be greater, and more filial? and that thou mayest be inabled to follow thy heavenly Father more fully as a dear Child? Is not sanctifying Grace preferred before Gold that perishes? dost thou not long that the new Creature maybe more lively in all the aētings of it? and that thou mayest become stronger in Spirit. If it be thus, it is a sign thy Spiritual Appetite is sharp and keen; and as the Supper is an ordinance proper and suitable to thee; so there is enough, and enough to fill thee, and thou shalt not be sent away empty for the promise is open thy Mouth wide, and I will fill it. Psal. 81. 10.

II. The Communicant should examine and ask himself. *Do I count the World but loss that I may gain Christ?* Has he the pre-eminence in my affections above all things visible, above all persons breathing? Where Faith is true, *Christ is precious*, 1 Pet. 2. 7. And Christ is not truly prized at all, unless he be prized above all. The young man in the Gospel lacked *one thing*, and that was the main; Love to Christ above his possessions. Those were not fit to taste of the Marriage,

riage Supper, who preferred their Oxen and their Farms, and their Merchandize before it. *Mat. 22.* Our Lord expresly requires us to undervalue what is dearest in this World in comparison of him. *Luk. 14. 26.* *If any man come to me and hate not i.e. less Love, his Father and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, yea, and his own life also, and what can be named dearer? he cannot be my Disciple.*

Speak therefore thus to thy self. *O my Soul! has thy Saviour and Lord indeed the highest room in thee? Corruptible things as Silver and Gold are unsuitable to thy nature, which is spiritual; and were insufficient to be the price for thy Redemption. The world has often proved a snare to thee, but Christ is a Saviour; the World is vanity, and less then nothing, but Christ is all in all: the World has often disappointed and vexed thee; but Christ can ease and satiate and replenish thee. The World, after thou hadst ruined thy self, was ready to help forward thy destruction. But Christ has the key of Hell, and can keep thee out of it; and the key of Heaven, and can give thee an abundant entrance into that everlasting Kingdom. If Christ can do more then the World can; nay if Christ can do all for a Soul, and the*

world can do just nothing at all: 'tis but reason that Christ should infinitely be preferred before it.

12. The Communicant should ask himself. *Am I reconciled to the Commands of God? Am I willing that my Heart should be Tables for the Spirit to write his Laws upon? that I may delight to do the will of God. Do I esteem not only some but all the Lords precepts, concerning, not only somethings, but concerning all things to be right? and do I hate every false way? Ps. 119. 128. O my Soul speak, Art thou irritated by the Law of God as formerly? are the motions to sin stronger and more vehement because the law forbids sin? Or is the Law of God dear to thee? and art thou ready to say at the hearing of every Command, Oh that my wayes were directed that I might keep this statute?* The stronger Grace is, the commands of God are farther off from being grievous. You may perceive how David was affected towards them, when he said Psal. 19. 10. *More are they to be desired then Gold, yea then much fine Gold. Sweeter also then Honey, and the droppings of the Honeycomb.* And where Grace is weak, though there be an untoward backwardness remaining to yield obedience to the Law: that backwardness

ness is lamented, and a Burthen, and the heart longs to be enlarged, that it may run the wayes of Gods Commandments, Psal. 119. 32.

13. The Communicant should examine himself. *Am I willing to receive whatever Christ has purchased, and is willing to give in this ordinance of the Supper?* Is every benefit of Christ lookt upon as worthy of all acceptation? All the benefits of Christ are dear; surely all of them are of great value. And there is not one of them that we can be well without, for these benefits are excellently suited unto our necessities. *O my Soul!* should the Communicant say, *thou likest the Lord Jesus as he is made unto thee Righteousness, as he screens thee from the Wrath of God, and interposes between thee and everlasting vengeance; But dost thou see thy need of his Wisdom to direct thee in the way of Truth, and to make all the wiles of the Subtle Serpent of none effect? And to make thee wise to Salvation, and for Eternity? Dost thou value Christ as made Sanctification and Redemption?* 1 Cor. 1. 30. *Dost thou count deliverance from all Iniquity a great and desirable part of Redemption? and Sanctification a great and desirable part of Salvation, because hereby thou art saved from thy pollutions and defilements?* Certainly as

there is no sin which should be loved, so there is nothing in sin to be liked ; and there is no thing in Christ but what is highly worthy to be esteemed.

14. The Communicant should examine and ask himself. *Am I grieved when I remember what I have done against God and the Lord Jesus ? Is it indeed the trouble and Affliction of my Soul, that I have so naturally and forwardly, and so long rebelled against the best Lord ; and been disobedient to the best Father ? Do I mourn and would I mourn a great deal more because I have dared the power of God, slighted his presence, contemned his favour and fellowship ; hated his holiness, abused the riches of his Grace and Mercy ? O my Soul how foolish and unwise hast thou been thus to requite the Lord that made and bought thee. How great an evil has it been in it self, and how evil has it been for thee, that thou hast forsaken the Fountain of Living waters ? Mourn that thou hast left such a God, and mourn the more kindly because still he is willing to receive thee. See O My Soul, how thy sin has peirced the only Saviour. Behold him in an Agony, behold him sweating drops of Blood first ; and after shedding all upon the Cross : See a sorrowful*
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Life ending in a Death more lamentable. Harken to thy Redeemer, crying out, My God my God, Why hast thou forsaken me. Behold the son of Righteousness setting in a cloud, and sin, thy sin the cause of all this. Break, break hard Heart! Let his Blood and Love together melt thee into Godly sorrow.

15. The Communicant should Examine himself, *Am I willing to give to Christ whatever he is willing to have? Can I lay all that I have and my self too at his feet? And not complement or dissemble with him, when I say, I and all is at his service? Do I yeild my whole Heart, my whole Man unto my Lord without any reserve? As Christ gave himself for me, and gave himself to me, so am I perswaded that I cannot dispose of my self better or so well, as to give up my self to Him? O My Soul is any thing too much, too good, or good enough for Jesus? Behold God in the Flesh, in the Manger, upon the Cross, and in the Grave, and if he condescended, obeyed, and suffered, and purchased so much for thee, O Be perfect and intire in the resignation of thy self to him. Thou readest of a Nonsuch Convert, 2 King. 23. 25. And that was Josiah. Like unto him there*

was no King before him, that turned unto the Lord with all his heart and with all his Soul, and with all his might, neither after him arose there any like him. Surely 'tis thy duty and Interest to write after this excellent pattern.

16. The Communicant should ask himself, *Am I desirous to be faithful in Gods Covenant to the last Breath? Do I count I obtain great mercy when I am made thus faithful? Have I counted the cost of being a Disciple? And is my love of the Lord and of Godliness greater then my fear of persecution? Do I distrust my corrupt and time-rourous Nature, and beg that my Lords Grace may be sufficient? Look, O My Soul as thy Head did unto the Joy that is set before thee, and start not at the Cross which is the way to the Crown. Persecution will fit thee for Heaven, & may speed thee thither. Fear not men since the worst is the best they can do; that is, set thee by Death out of their reach, and send thee to thy Fathers house and bosom. Faint not at Troubles, for these light afflictions which are but for a moment do work for persevering Saints a far more exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17.*

17. The Communicant should Examine himself, *Am I taught of God to love my Brethren?* 1 *Theff.* 4. 9. Bitterness and Wrath and Anger and all kinde of Malice is leaven that is to be purged out. All that come to the Table should put on as the Elect of God Holy and Beloved, Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of mind, Meekness, Long-Suffering: Forbearing one another, and Forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, as Christ forgave them, so also should they do: And above all these things, they should put on Charity which is the Bond of Perfectness, and the Peace of God should rule in their Hearts wherunto they are also called in one Body, Col. 3. 12, 13, 14. 15. As there is a representation of the Body of Christ in this Ordinance of the Supper, so there is some signification of the Love and Unity that ought to be in the Body Mystical, that is to say, the Church of Christ, the Apostles Words are plain, 1 *Cor.* 10. 17. For we being many are one Bread and one Body, for we are all partakers of that one Bread.

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You see *how you are to prove your selves,* and *what questions* to propound to your own souls, before you come to the Lords Table. And if your Consciences can answer for you before God in the *affirmative* unto such questions as these: You may without presumption conclude that you are the Children of God, that you have a right to come to your Fathers Table, and that the Bread of Life belongs to you.

In the Third place, I am to direct you *how you may prove and call your selves to an account every day*, that you may walk with the greater circumspection.

The God of Heaven is the Lord of Time, he observes how our Time is husbanded whether well or ill ; and he can put a period to it when he pleases. And if we did seriously observe what fills up our time, so many days would not be spent and lost in sin and vanity. It was an Heathen who said, *he had lost a day*, when a day passed without doing of good ; which shews he used to reflect upon the actions of every day, whether they were Good or Evil. I would
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advise you much to observe your selves. Never any more spend a day as if you were never to account for that day, but remember what the Apostle Paul says, Eph. 5. 16. *See then that ye walk circumspectly not as fools but as wise Redeeming the Time.* And the Apostle Peter gives the like charge, 1 Pet. 1. 17. *Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.*

Towards the Evening of the day, it will not be amiss to retire, and laying aside other business to converse with thy self, and ask thy self these or such like questions.

1. Did I wake with God in the Morning, and in his strength resolve to walk with God all this day long? Every one of us should resemble David, who said, *How precious are thy thoughts unto me O God! When I awake I am still with thee,* Psal. 139. 17, 18. The first Fruits of our Thoughts should be offered up unto God; and if the first Fruit be Holy, all the rest of our Thoughts are the more likely to be free from wickedness and vanity. And as the soul should be lifted up to the Lord at the very first unlocking of the senses; so there should be a resolving and

and forecasting how to please and glorifie him. Every day we live, the main end of our living should be minded; and that is to honour that God who is our Maker, Benefactor, Saviour, *for off him and through him, and to him are all things, and to him belongs the Glory for ever, Rom. 11. ult.*

2. Ask thy self, *Did I willingly leave my Bed that I might go to Prayer and search the Word of God? And did I long for and enjoy Communion with God in these duties?* Many will leave their Beds most readily, when they are to go a pleasant Journey; or when they hope to drive on an advantagious bargain; or when they are to put on their finest Clothes. But how few do shake off sleep in a morning, that they may go to the Throne of Grace, where the truest, both pleasure and profit is to be found. *David* lookt up to Heaven, as soon as his Eyes were open, *Psal. 5.3. My Voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.* Nay he says, *Psal. 119. 147. I prevented the dawning of the Morning, and cryed, I hoped in thy Word.* Early Prayer and Searching of the Scripture is the way to obtain a
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bleſſing at the beginning of the day, the influence of which may be perceived all the day after. Communion with God in the morning may knit the Heart ſo faſt to him as that no Temptation may be able to draw it away from him afterwards.

It was a pretty paſſage of *Herbert*.

*Who read a Chapter when they riſe,
Shall ne're be troubled with ill Eyes.*

Indeed Prayer and looking ſeriously into the Word of God at firſt, is the way to keep Eyes and Heart, and Hands and Tongue, and feet, and all in order.

3. Ask thy ſelf, *Have I walked within my Houſe with a perfect Heart? Praying with them, Edifying of them, and giving no occaſion of offence and ſtumbling to them?* There will be the practice of Godlineſs in the Houſe, where there is really the power of Godlineſs in the Heart. Every Chriſtian Family ſhould be like *Philemons, a Church, Philem.*
2. 3. *To the Church in thy Houſe, Grace and Peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* A Church implies a joyning together

gether in that Worship and Service which God has commanded. Christian Families being Churches there ought to be an assembling of the Family together to pour out joynt Prayers unto God. *I and my House we will serve the Lord*, says good old *Joshua*, *Josh. 24. 15.* I know Abraham, says God, *that he will command his Children, and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord*, *Gen. 18. 19.* Family Prayer is enjoyned in the Lords Prayer; *Give us this day our daily Bread*, shews plainly that those who ordinarily and daily eat together, ought ordinarily and daily to pray together. The Master of a Family has a great trust committed to him, even all the Souls under his roof, and therefore by Praying with them and for them, by reading of the Holy Scripture, by Counsel and Instruction, and by an Holy and excellent example he should endeavour to be beneficial to them, and all the members of the Family should do the duties of their place and relation.

4. Ask thy self, *Have I kept my Heart this day with all diligence?* The wise man gives that precept, *Prov. 4. 23. Keep thy Heart with all diligence*: And every one that

that is wise will follow it. The Heart is to be kept *for* God and Christ; there should be a most joyful consent, that the Father and the Son should make their abode there: That the Word of God should be *hid* there. And the Heart should be kept *from* Sin and Satan, and this present evil World. Keep thy Heart, for without diligent keeping it will be like the sluggards Field, nothing but what is stinking and noysom will grow in it. Examine, Have the Thoughts of thy Heart been Holy? Has God been frequently, awfully, and delightfully thought on? Have thy Affections been Spiritual, and most strongly inclined and carried forth, after Heavenly and Spiritual things? Has Pride, Envy, Anger, and Evil Concupiscence, and every other Heart Sin been hated? Upon the first appearance of such Corruption, hast thou presently cryed to Heaven for help, and never ceased, till they were gotten under? The difficulty and also the excellency of the Christian Religion lies in keeping the Heart pure; the Heart then is in no wise at any time to be neglected.

5. Ask thy self, *Have I walked and prayed that I might not enter into Temptation?*
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And especially *have I been vigilant against my Bosom sin?* 'Tis easier by far to keep out of Temptation, then being once entangled to recover out of Temptation. 'Tis easier to continue standing then after a fall to rise again; and the reason is because a fall weakens us and disposes unto further falling. Therefore the tempter is to be resisted at first, there should be no parlying with him, but he should meet with an obstinate deafness, an Holy inflexibility and stiffness; and an utter detestation and abhorrency of all his motions.

When we are thus like iron pillars, and like brazen Walls, Hell is confounded, the Devil flies. He *fights* indeed but he *does not prevail against us, for the Lord is with us to deliver us*, to allude to that, *Jer. 1. 18, 19*. Especially we should place the strongest guard where we are weakest: And take heed lest the sins of our *complexions, and constitutions*, and the sins of our *Callings* and the sins of the *Times* prevail; and bring us under guilt and defilement.

6. Ask thy self. *Have I done Justly and acted as if I loved Mercy?* The false Balance,

lance, divers measures, and the bag with deceitful weights, are an Abomination to God. And every good man will hate them. That we ought to be exactly Just and Righteous in our dealings; is deeply engraven on the Heart of man by Nature.

Excellent is that passage of an Heathen Poet. *Persius Satyr. 2.*

*Compositum ius fasque animo, sanctosque
recessus*

*Mentis: et incoctum generoso pectus ho-
nesto.*

*Hæc cedo ut admoveam templis & farre li-
tabo.*

The meaning of which verses, is,

That the meanest Sacrifices are acceptable unto God, when the Sacrificer is Just and Righteous. But the Word of Grace, does abound in precepts of this kind.

The Gospel teaches that men should live Soberly and Righteously, as well as Godly in this present World, *Tit. 2. 11, 12.* And *1 Thes. 4. 6.* That no man go beyond and defraud his

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Brother in any matter because the Lord is the avenger of all such. If thou wrongest another thou dost thy self a farr greater injury. Dishonest gain will be thy own Eternal loss without Repentance and Restitution according to thy ability.

And as thou shouldst be a practiser of Justice so a *lover of Mercy*. The Lord delights in shewing mercy and so shouldst thou. Thou oughtest to be merciful to thy *Beast*, and how much more to thy *Brother*? And if thou must Feed and Clothe the Hungry and naked Bodies of others, according to thy power: Certainly their precious souls should share in thy compassions, and by wise reproofs, faithful advice and frequent Prayer, thou shouldst endeavour to prevent their perishing Everlastingly.

7. Ask thy self, *Have I bridled my tongue?* If there be not a care to do this *all Religion is but vain*, *Jam. 1. 26.* The Apostle uses two excellent similitudes relating to the Tongue, *Jam. 3. 3. 4.* *We put bits in the Horses Mouthes that they may obey us,* And Certainly we should set a Watch before the door

door of our Lips that we may not offend in the words we speak. *Behold also the Ship, which though they are so great and are driven of fierce Winds, yet are they turned about with a very small Helm whithersoever the Governour listeth.* The Helm of a Ship had need have a skilful hand, and the Tongue of a man had need be wisely managed. How few make Conscience of *Tongue sins*, who pretend highly to conscienciousness in other matters? *If by our Words we are to be Justified and Condemned.* Good Lord! How few will be Justified, how many will be Condemned at the great day!

Oh Watch over this little member thy Tongue which boasteth great things. If thy *Communication be good to the use of Edifying, and which administers Grace to the Hearers*; as it ought to be, *Eph. 4. 29.* Then thy Tongue will be thy *Glory*, and 'twill be as a *Tree of Life* to Feed others. But if thy discourse be wicked and vain, thy *Glory* is turned into shame, and thy *Tongue is set on fire of Hell.*

Examine thy self strictly, whether thou dost abhor lying Words? As one that be-

leives all lyers shall have their portion in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone which is the second Death, Rev. 21. 8.

Examine whether thou dost make Conscience of *Backbiting* thy Neighbour, of *Receiving* and spreading a *reproach* against him? If thou art a backbiter, a slanderer, a railer, where is thy love to thy Brother, and how canst thou call thy self a Citizen of *Sion*? *Psal.* 15. 1, 2, 3. Filthy and foolish talking, and Jestings, is unbecoming a Christians mouth, this is to be avoided as well as Oaths and Cursing. And ever remember *that in multitude of Words there wanteth not sin*, and therefore what *Job* speaks unto his Friends. turn it into a petition unto God, *Job* 6. 24. *Teach me and I will hold my Tongue*, unless my duty oblige to speak to thy Glory.

8. Ask thy self, *Have I been spiritual in my civil Employments*? Was my conversation at all in Heaven, or did I only mind Earthly things all the day long? 'Tis the duty of Christians to have the things of this World, as though they had none of them; to *Buy as though they possessed not*,
to

to use this World as not abusing it, because the fashion of this World passeth away, 1 Cor. 7. 30, 31.

The work of the Calling is to be minded, and to be idle therein is to *walk* very disorderly, 2 *Thess.* 3. 11, 12. But yet the working out of our Salvation is to be lookt upon as the main business of our lives, unto which we should make our other actions to become subservient. As the Grace of God makes a difference between the Christian and another man; so the Christian should not only Pray and Hear, but also Buy and Sell, and Trade, and deal in the matters of the World after a different manner: He should always be in the Fear of God, always eying his Rule, and act conscientiously: He should be *wise unto that which is Good, but simple concerning Evil*: He should not be over eager after, nor trust in uncertain Riches, nor be high-minded because of them: But remember his time on Earth is short, and as he must quickly leave the World, so he must also give an account whether he has improved the World to the Glory of God; and by doing of Good with what he has, he has

made unto himself, a friend of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, Luke 16. 9.

9. Ask thy self, *Have I been careful to Redeem Time?* I count my Jewels, my Gold, my Silver too precious to throw about the Streets, but have I not been prodigal and lavish of time, which is of greater value? and which no price can purchase when once 'tis past and gone? Those who are in Heaven, how glad are they that they improved Time, and made good provision for Eternity! And they who are in Hell, how do they Curse their Folly in wasting such a Treasure, and wish they had never had either any time or any being, since the time which was given them to repent in, was spent in making themselves for ever miserable!

Mark O man how thy time passes! How fast, how constantly thy glasse runs.

Examine what becomes of all thy time, and unto what account it turns? If the fillings of Gold are saved, surely every parcel of time is highly worth Redeeming. Let things that *must be done* have *time sufficient*; let

let things that *may be done* have *time convenient*, and for those things which ought not to be done, let them have *no time at all*. In a word *so number thy dayes as to apply thy Heart unto Wisdom*, *Psal. 90. 12*. Every day think of Death which will end all thy days.

10. Ask thy self, *Have I received Mercies thank fully, and born Crosses patiently?* A Christians Pilgrimage is chequer-work a mixture of black and white together, sometimes he may want, sometimes he may abound: He should *know how* to do both, as the Apostle did, *Phil. 4. 12*. Mercies are designed to be as cords to draw thee, and Afflictions as rods to drive thee nearer unto God; let both attain their end. What high ingratitude is it against Heaven and what an injurious disservice to thy self, to take the Mercies of God and serve thy Lusts and Satan with them? Let every days kindness overcome thee, and be sure to glorifie that God in whose hand thy Breath and Life is, and from whose hand thou dost receive every benefit, and in whom is all thy hope of future happiness. And if he does afflict thee do not murmur,

for *whom the Lord Loves he chastens*, whom he chastens he does design their *profit*, and can there be truer profit then to be made in a greater measure *partakers of the Lords Holiness?* Heb. 12. 6. 10. If thou dost but wait a while, thou will see a *lightsome lamp, to follow a smoaking Furnace*, Gen. 15. 17. An happy issue of all thy troubles. Affliction will be a means so to clear thy sight, and cleanse thy Soul, that thou wilt grant there is reason to kiss the rod, and to acknowledge the faithfulness and care of him that used it.

II. Ask thy self, *How much am I advanced in Heavens way, farther to day then I was yesterday?* How many new steps have I taken towards the New Jerusalem? Have I indeed gone forward in the narrow path which leads to Life, or have I stood still, or gone backward? 'Tis our duty to *grow in Grace*, 2 Pet. 3. ult. To *follow on to know the Lord*, and to follow still harder after him. Our Salvation growes nearer and nearer every day, and therefore our motions should be more strong and sprightly towards our home and centre.

Examine every day what Grace thou hast strengthened, what corruption thou hast weakned that day? Hast thou lower thoughts of thy self? And higher thoughts of the Grace of God? Is thy Faith more firm and operative? Is thy love more ardent and constraining? Art thou more fit for thy Masters use, and prepared unto every good work, and more meet to be a partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light? That day is certainly lost in which more Grace is not gained, and in which never a step is taken in the way Everlasting. Oh! Be such Just and Righteous ones as Solomon speaks of, and *let your path be as the shining Light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

12. Ask thy self, *Have I waited on God all this day long?* Has my dependance been upon him? My expectation of all good from him? And my care to do what is good in his sight? 'Tis both our duty and our honour to wait on our God continually; as a Servant waits upon his Master, as a Son upon his Father. Hark unto *David Psal. 25. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me*

me for thou art the God of my Salvation, on thee do I wait all the day. We ought to be sensible that *all our springs* are in God, and that 'tis the great interest and business of us all to please him.

Though others live without God in the World, and forget him days without number; yet we should be under the powerful impressions of those great Truths. That *God is All-Seeing, that God is All-sufficient,* and we should *walk before him and be perfect,* for *the Eyes of the Lord run too and fro through the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose Heart is perfect towards him,* 2 Chron. 16. 9.

13. Ask thy self, *What care have I had to adorn the Gospel this day, and to win those who are without to a love and liking of Religion?* The wicked hate instruction and cast the Word behind them, they will not be at the pains to look into the Book of the Gospel; and therefore let them be able to read the excellency and the efficacy of the Gospel, in the lives of those that are Professors. *With well doing we should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* We should

should be Blameless and Harmless, the Sons of God without Rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation, among whom we should shine as Lights in the World, Phil. 2. 15.

Calling your selves to an Account thus every day, will make the Authority of Conscience to be more own'd and revered: The Heart will be the better kept within bounds when it knows it must be Catechised at Evening, and severely chidden for every Transgression. By this course the practise of Repentance will be promoted, if there be a falling into sin, and we shall rise and recover the sooner; and if we are enabled to walk before God in Truth from day to day, and keep a Conscience void of offence, we shall the more thankfully and comfortably take notice of the Grace of God in us and with us, by which we are what we are, and which is not bestowed upon us in vain, 1 Cor. 15. 10.

And if every day we should thus prove ourselves, Upon the Lords Day we should do it much more. We should not be so
Sacrile-

Sacrilegious as to wast any of that *hallowed Time*. We should examine whether our Hearts took their flight to Heaven at first waking and continued there without descending all the Day? We should examine whether God had our thoughts and the very cream and strength of our Affections; and the World and the concernments of it were made to stand by, while our Hearts did Worship? We should examine, whether our discourse was altogether spiritual, whether Earthly Employments and Recreations were laid aside, and whether our Souls did indeed rest in God and Jesus Christ? And resist Satan, and disallow of every thing which might be a Distraction, Deading, and Disturbance?

We should seriously reflect upon our secret Duties, and our manner of engaging in publick Ordinances, and see whether God was pleased and manifested his Gracious Presence, Power, and Love: And whether our Souls were indeed profited and delighted in the Closet, in the Family, in the Sanctuary? Every Sabbath is indeed a Golden season of Grace, which it much concerns us to improve; and we should be

unsatisfied unlesse we endeavour to spend it after such a manner, in the Affectionate and delightful admiration and Worship of the Lord, as the Saints in Heaven do celebrate an Eternal Sabbath.

U S E. IV.

Shall be of Exhortation unto the duty in in the Text, be perswaded all of you to *examine and prove your selves.* And that the Word of Exhortation may be the more prevalent, it shall be particularly directed unto several sorts of Persons.

First,

Let *Wicked men that are notoriously ungodly* prove themselves. And truly such at the first view of themselves may presently perceive whose they are : Satan works more openly in these scandalous Children of Disobedience, and leads them Captive in the sight of all. Their Cursing and Swearing their hating of Gods Word, and Sabbath, and Messengers ; their Fornication and Adultery ; their Stealing, Injustice and Lying ; their Covetousness and Drunkenness, and

and Railing at Religion, and Abhorring all that are serious. These things are the Devils Badg and Livery, and plainly declare that such persons are in the *gall of bitterness, and in the bond of Iniquity*. Oh you that *declare your sin as Sodom and hide it not*. You cannot deny your wickedness pray be at last convinced of it, and think what will be the end of the course you are taking.

Let these five words of advice be acceptable.

1. Look about you and see *innumerable Evils compassing you about*, *Psal. 40. 12*. How vast is the number, how heinous the nature, and how high and horrid the aggravations of your iniquities! Your sins are as *Scarlet and Crimson*, indeed your *Trepasses are grown up to the very Heavens*, and notwithstanding your great Abominations, you have been impudent and hardhearted: Your Necks have been like an Iron sinew, and your Brows Brass, and your Hearts like an Adamant-stone, you have refused to be ashamed and to return: The least of all your sins is enough to damn you, and should not the consideration of so many, and

and such great ones, daunt and fright you? That God who is to judge you, knows what you have done. He has *compassed your Paths*, has heard your *words*, has lookt into your *Hearts*, is *acquainted with all your wayes*, *Psal.* 139. 1, 2, 3. And has not forgotten any of your evil works and wickednesse. Let all this fill you with trouble and make you tremble.

2. Look *within you*, and take notice of a Fountain of sin there. The Lord that searches the Heart of man gives it a very bad report, *Gen.* 6. 5. *God saw that the Wickedness of man was great upon the Earth, and every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only Evil continually.* And Christ who knew what was in man, expressely tells us that out of the Heart of man proceed all the Evils whereby he is defiled, *Matth.* 15. 19, 20. Satan indeed is your Enemy and he shoves himself so in Tempting you to Evil; but all your sins are properly your own Hearts Off-spring, the principal blame is to be laid at your own door. Your corrupted natures make you Devils, Tempters, Enemies to your selves, destroyers of your selves, *Jam.* 1. 14, 15. *Every man is Tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust,*
and

and enticed ; then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin, and Sin when finished bringeth forth Death.

3. Look *above you*, and behold an angry God, a God angry particularly with you, and can you stand before his indignation? Take notice of the *Mountains quaking, the Hills melting, the Rocks overturned, the Heavens Astonished ; the Devils trembling*, when the Lord is Wrath, and do you think that you can prosper if you harden you selves against him ? His *Wrath is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of men*, Rom. i. 18. When that Wrath is felt ; how heavy will it be found ?

4. Look *beneath you*, and see a flaming Furnace : Thats a dreadful fire indeed which never shall be quenched, which will always Torment, but never quite consume, and make an end of those that are burning in it. We read that sinners must dwell with *Everlasting Burnings*. Our Lord tells you that in Hell, *the Worm dies not and the Fire is not quenched*, and he says this thrice, nay,

six

six times together, that man may believe and fear, *Mar. 9. 43. 48.* And into this *Hell the wicked shall be turned, and all the Nations that forget God, Psal. 9. 17.* This is 'as certain, as 'tis certain God is true and Powerful and Just, and Holy.

5. Look the very worst of you *into the Gospel*, and behold the Lord Jesus stretching forth his hand *all the day long even to them that are Disobedient and Gain-saying, Rom. 10. 21.* Stretching forth the hand, is as much as inviting sinners to come to him, and offering Salvation to them. He has Justified and washed and sanctified, and saved as bad as you. And if you will at length consent to be sanctified as well as saved, and come to him; he will do both for the most guilty and defiled among you. Oh! Look to Jesus whom you have slighted, and cry to be drawn to him!

Secondly,

Let meerly *Moral men* prove themselves. These have very great need to search themselves that they may not be undone for ever by self-confidence. When I speak of Mo-

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rality,

rality, I do not mean an universal respect
 unto the precepts of the Moral Law, for
 such a kind of respect, only those who are
 truly Regenerate and Religious, yeild unto
 the Lords Commands. But by Morality
 I understand an external Righteousness,
 and freedom from more gross and notori-
 ous iniquities; such a Moralist was the
 Pharisee, who said, *God I thank thee I am
 not as other men are, Extortioners, Unjust,
 Adulterers, Luke 18. 11.* And such Mora-
 lity was to be found in the Apostle Paul,
 while he was Graceless before his Conver-
 sion, *Touching the Righteousness of the Law I was
 blamelesse,* says he, *Phil. 3. 6.* Now Per-
 sons upon Examination may know them-
 selves to be but meerly moral, by these fol-
 lowing signs.

1. Meerly moral men are *great strangers
 to the Corruption of their own Natures.* Here-
 upon they think, themselves to be *whole*,
 and do not apprehend any necessity of a
 new Birth, of having a New Heart given to
 them. When *Nicodemus* the Pharisee came
 to Christ, Christ told him of the Corrupti-
 on of Nature, *That which is Born of the
 Flesh is Flesh,* and except a man be Born
 again

again he cannot see the Kingdom of God, Joh. 3. 3. 6. The Apostle Paul while a Pharisee was *alive* in his own Thoughts, though really dead in Trespasses and sins. Moral men not knowing what they are by Nature, continue securely in a state of Nature; and suppose they have no need of the Blood and Spirit of Christ, whereby alone they might be Justified and Renewed in order to Salvation.

2. Meerly moral men, *though blameless in their Lives, yet their Hearts are allowed to be wicked.* The Pharisees of old were against actual Murther, but allowed of Malice, Envy and Revenge, they were free from gross Adultery, but made nothing of Evil Concupiscence. Therefore our Lord. *Matt.*

5. does at large shew the spirituality and extent of the Law of God, and how it lays an obligation upon the very Heart, unto Purity and Meekness and Love, as well as requires external Conformity to the Letter of it in the Life and Conversation. What kind of Hearts have these Moral men? What Pride and high Thoughts of themselves, what hatred is allowed to lodge in them? What Ignorance and Contempt of

Communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ? How exceeding suitable and desirable are the Wealth, Preferments, and Delights of this World, but their Hearts are meer strangers unto the Love of God, and delight in him, and rejoycing in Christ Jesus: And which is worst of all, they think this is needless, and that their Hearts are so good they need not be changed and made better.

3. Meerly Moral men *do rest in their own External Righteousness, and rest upon it.* They are confident that *good living*, and giving every man his due, is enough; though the meanwhile the World, and the God of this World fill their Hearts. They act as if that Precept were not in the Bible, *My Son give me thy Heart, Prov. 23. 26.* As if they had never read of *Dauids* practise, *Psal. 25. 1. Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my Soul.* And as they rest in their own external Righteousness, as if inward Holiness were not required; so they rest and rely upon it, as if this were enough to justify them before God and to purchase their acceptance and Salvation: But this ruins them, and
cuts

cuts them short of the Righteousness of the Son of God, *Rom. 10. 3, 4.* For they being Ignorant of Gods Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of God, for Christ is the end of the Law for Righteousness to every one that Believeth.

Thus you meerly moral men may know your selves. And oh ! That you would be advised,

1. To Consider that *Morality can neither justify it self nor you* ; It cannot justify it self because 'tis meerly external, a piece of Pageantry and Hypocrisie for want of inward purity, and how then can it justify you before that God who is so glorious in Righteousness and Holiness ; You certainly stand in need of Christ as well as the greatest sinners in the World, and must needs to Hell without Him. The Apostle *Paul* was a great Moralist before he was a Christian, but when his Eyes were open, Christ was valued as the onely Justifier and Saviour of sinful and lost man, and says he, I desire to be found in Him not having my own Righteousness, *Phil. 3. 9.*

2. Pray that the *Commandment* may come with *Power*, and shew your sins even those that lye hid in your very Hearts, and make you sensible of your damned and lost Estate, *Rom. 7. 9: I was alive without the Law once but when the Commandment came sin revived and I died.* Notwithstanding all my confidence of my Goodness and good Estate before I saw my self by Law a condemned and dead man, and no hope of life without Jesus a Mediatour.

3. Be sensible of the *necessity of the New-Birth*, and cry for the Spirit. Those that are born again are born of the Spirit of God, *Joh. 3. 6. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.* This Spirit God is willing to give to all that ask him, seeing indeed their need of him. Begg hard for the Spirit that by him you may be *enlightned, convinced of sin*, and set at *Liberty* from it, that you may be drawn to Christ, and *changed into the glorious image of God*, which does consist not in Righteousness meerly external, but in Righteousness and true Holiness.

Thirdly,

Thirdly,

Let *unsound Professors* prove themselves. Why should such entertain a confidence which the Lord will reject? Why should they joyn with a subtle Serpent to deceive themselves? Oh! that they would bring their base mettall to the Touchstone, that they may perceive how vastly it differs from pure and tried Gold. And that they would weigh themselves in the balance of the Sanctuary, that their Consciences may perceive what reason there is that *Tekel*, should be written upon them, they are *weighed in the balance and are found utterly wanting*. Now *unsound Professors* may come this way to a *Conviction* of their own unsoundness.

1. They *cannot endure plain dealing*. Our Lord tells us that this is the Worlds fault and *Condemnation*, that they love darkness rather than light because their Deeds are Evil. *Joh. 3. 19.* And *unsound Professors* being not really come out of the World, no wonder if the Word be disgusted, that discovers and reproves them. *Sharp reproof* makes us *sound in the Faith*, *Tit. 1. 13.* But such rebukes the *unsound* cannot bear. Deal

gently said David with the Young Man Absalom. And this is the Hypocrites Language. Deal gently with my Pride, and selfishness, and darling lusts, and sinful compliance for safety, and profit, and preferment sake. It shews they are brutish and void of true understanding because reproof is hated, Prov. 12. 1. *He that hateth reproof is brutish.*

2. Unsound Professours regard iniquity in their Hearts. Shame and Fear, and hope of repute among men, may curb and restrain them from running into the act of sin, but the inward Love to it is not indeed mortified. It may truly be said concerning the Hypocrite, *he abhorreth not evil*, Psal. 36. 4. He may upon some accounts be afraid and ashamed to commit sin, but he does not hate and abhor to Commit sin. He secretly loves some sin or other, though he hides, both his sin and his love to it, he does not long for the Death of all.

3. Unsound Professours carry on Carnal designs in their profession of Religion, Religion by such is made sometime a cloak to Covetousness, or to Concupiscence, or to Maliciousness; they do not design the pleasing and glorifying of God; *this end sways not* with

with the Heart till Grace is wrought there. But they profess Godliness, that they may sin the more plausibly and unsuspectedly, and that they may bring about their selfish projects the more cleverly.

4. Unsound Professours do *relish only the things of the Flesh*, which shews that they are after the Flesh. *Rom. 8. 5. They that are after the Flesh do mind the things of the Flesh, and they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.* They favour not Spiritual things; neither are they troubled at the Carnality of their minds and affections, nor do they desire to be made spiritually minded:

Now you who are thus convicted to be Hypocritical and unsound Professours, I beseech you remember.

1. *God looks into you*, He that hates sin most perfectly and will punish it most severely, knows how sinful you are. If all things are open and naked to his view, surely he looks into the painted and *whited sepulchre*, and beholds all the filthiness and rottenness that is within it.

2. Hypocrisie is *very hateful to God*, His Eye and Knowledge is disregarded by the Hypocrite; his hand is not feared, his Grace and Goodness horribly contemned and abused. And all this the Hypocrite does to Gods very face, in his very House, while he is bowing the knee before him, and giving a great many good words to him, and seems very devout in his service.

3. Hypocrisie will *be at last detected*. When thou art distracted by a Disease, or wounded in thy Conscience thou mayst be forced to confess, thy Injustice, Impurity, and other Abominations: But if this be not at the last day all will come out to thy Everlasting Contempt and Confusion. *For God will bring every work into Judgement with every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil, Eccles. 12. 14.* Be wise therefore O unsound Professors! Dissemble not with God, deceive not your selves, consent at last to be searched and sanctified, and being humbled and ashamed because of your deceitful dealing with the Lord, and Religion; pray to be made *Israelites indeed in whom there is no guile.*

Fourthly,

Fourthly,

Let *sincere Saints* prove themselves. I have at large given you before the Characters of them who are Saints in sincerity. They may know themselves by their *coming out from the World*, by their *preferring the living true and Everlasting God, in their choice, before all Lying and Dying Vanities*, by their *thankful acceptance of the Lord Jesus as a Saviour, and Redeemer from all iniquity, as well as from the wrath that is to come*. Finally they may be known by their *desires after the Grace of God in Truth, and to be cleansed from all filthiness both of the Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God*. Now you who are thus really sanctified I would counsel in three particulars.

1. Acknowledge that *the Grace of God has made you what you are*, that you are Called, Justified, Adopted, changed into the Image of your heavenly Father, is owing to the rich and glorious Grace of God. This makes the difference between the Children of God, and the Children of Disobedience. *What have you that you have not received?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. And what have you received but what you were in your selves utterly unworthy to receive?

2. Be

2. Be sensible that *that Grace which has begun must perfect that which does concern you.* That picture which was begun by *Apelles* could not be perfected by the hand of any other. Look therefore unto the *Author* to be the *finisher of your Faith*, Heb. 12. 2. And truly you are encouraged to a more firm reliance, by what the *Apostle* speaks, Phil. 1. 6. *Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.*

3. Do nothing *unbecoming your present State and Relation, and future hopes.* You are *highly favoured, the Lord is with you.* You are advanced to be the *Children of the Lord Almighty*, to be the *Heirs of Life and Glory*, and *Joint-heirs with Christ himself*, to be *Kings and Priests unto God.* Let there be an *Holy Majesty* in your *Conversations*, rejoice and work *Righteousness.* Count it below you to be proud and high-minded; below you to mind *Earthly things*, or to do any thing that looks like serving *Sin and Satan.*

4. Having attained unto peace *take heed of breaking it.* Assurance may much more easily

easily be lost then gained. There must be all diligence to get it; but negligence may lose it. After the Prince of Peace has spoken to thy Heart, and said *Peace, be still*. Oh! do nothing to raise a new storm and tempest in thy Conscience. But walk very humbly and closely with God. That you may live in the truest sense pleasant lives. And may come at last to Heaven, which is indeed the *fair Haven* in a blessed Calm; and that of the Psalmist may be verified in you, *Psal. 37. 37. Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.*

Thus have I finished this Subject of *Self-Examination*, a Duty which the Ungodly mind not, which Hypocrites are afraid and do not care to meddle with, and which if Saints would more frequently and thoroughly engage in, there would be less unbelief and fear, more joy and Faith in the Church of Christ. You that are *Saints*, In this discourse I have been *helping of your Joy*. Let it not be hindred by your selves. Some clusters of *Canaan* might be brought to the Wilderness, and more of Heavens joys might be tasted in the Vale of Tears, if the Heirs of Heaven would but take more pains
in

in self-trial, to clear up their Title. And as for you that are *Hypocrites and Unbelievers*, I have don you a kindness in telling you what you are, and what you may expect hereafter. If after all, you will put a cheat upon your own souls; you must be blamed and your selves must smart for it. If you will cry *peace and safety*, till Christ himself does thunder that sentence in your ears; Go ye *Cursed into Everlasting fire*; Who can help it? Alas! Alas! 'Twill be too late to look up to Heaven, and to look into your selves, when the Gulph is fixed between Heaven and you. Let every sinner therefore try his own ways, and cry to the Lord, to search, and change, and turn his Heart. For 'tis the greatest Wisdom to prevent those mistakes, which will be the *mistakers Eternal ruine*, and which after death will be found impossible to be corrected.

Herbert. page 105.

Canst he idle? Canst thou play,
Foolish soul, who sinn'd to day?

Rivers run, and springs each one
Know their home, and get them gone :
Hast thou tears, or hast thou none ?

If, poor soul, thou hast no tears,
Would thou hadst no faults or fears !
Who hath these, those ills forbears.

But if yet thou idle be,
Foolish Soul who di'd for thee ?

Who did leave his Fathers Throne,
To assume thy Flesh and 'Bone ?
Had he life, or had he none ?

If he had not liv'd for thee,
Thou hadst di'd most wretchedly ;
And two deaths had been thy fee.

He so far thy good did plot,
That his own self he forgot.
Did he die, or did he not ?

If he had not di'd for thee,
Thou hadst liv'd in misery ;
Two lives worse than ten deaths be.

He that loseth Gold, though dross,
Tells to all he meets his cross:
He that sins, hath he no loss?

He that finds a silver vein,
Thinks on it, and thinks again;
'Brings thy saviours death no gain?

Who in Heart not ever kneels,
Neither sin nor saviour feels.

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Meditations

ON THE LORDS SUPPER.

MEDITATIONS. I.

W Herefore do I spend my money
for that which is not Bread?
And my labour for that
which can never satisfie?

I- Many a time have I made trial of the things
that are visible, but the higher my expecta-
tions have been raised, the greater has been
my disappointment. I have sought that
among the Creatures which is not to be
found. Sin has turned this World into a
Country, far from God; and truly Husks
are the best fare that ever this World hath
yielded me. 'Tis high time to come out from

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the

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the World and to be separate, lest my Soul perish for hunger there. *Meat that perishes* is improper for a Soul that is of an immortal nature, and of an Everlasting duration. *I will arise and go* unto my God and Father: He has promised to *satiate and replenish the weary and sorrowful Soul*. In his House I am sure *there is Bread enough and to spare.*

MEDITATION. II.

Boast not O *Mammon* of thy Treasures! Unless thou hast that which is of sufficient value to be a ransom for me. Can all the Wealth of both the *Indies* pay the debt which by sin I have contracted? Can Riches satisfy for the wrong I have done to the justice of God by my Transgression? Oh no *I was not Redeemed with corruptible things as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.* Pardon, Grace, and Glory are such gifts of God as are not to be purchased with money; for if they were so many Rich men would not be lost for ever. Wealth cannot buy any out of the Devils possession, but rather brings them more under

Meditations on the Lords Supper. 275

der his power, it cannot save any from Hell, but rather proves a means to send them thither: *For they that will be Rich fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in Destruction and Perdition.*

MEDITATION. III.

O my Soul strive not to load thy self with the thick clay of this present World, this will debase thee exceedingly, and defile and burthen thee. Thou needest that which is of more value then Gold that perishes to enrich thee, and that is precious Faith. Thou needest a garment to cover thy nakedness, which no Shop on Earth can furnish thee withal, and that is the Robe of Christs Righteousness: Thou needest Food to satisfy thy hunger, which cannot be got for money or price, but may be had without it, and that is the Bread of God which came down from Heaven to give Life unto the World: Thou art of Heavenly original, and therefore mind not Earthly things, for it can never be well with thee, untill thou return to that All-sufficient Lord, who is the Father of Spirits and alone can fill them out of his own fulness.

MEDITATION. IV.

Lord ! Thou who art full of Love, may *love it self*, and art jealous of my love lest it should be misplaced ; Turn away my Eyes that they may not be *set upon that which is not*, If *Riches take to themselves wings and fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven* ; let my Heart be so wise, as to get the start of them, and fly away first from such transitory and fading vanities, and fly towards the highest Heaven of all. How great a gain will it be to lose my love to the World ! And though it be no gain at all to thee for me to love thee, who art so self-sufficient from Everlasting to Everlasting ; yet I shall hereby be an Eternal gainer, and shall be interested in that love which is Everlasting and unchangeable. Oh ! *Love me freely* in the Son of thy love ; and inflame my Heart with love to Thee ! 'Tis my Honour that I have leave to love thee who art so high and glorious, and 'tis *thy first and great Command that I should love thee with my whole Heart, and Soul and Strength*. Let this Command be kept, and let not the biggest offer the World can make

make me, ever tempt me to break it, so as to prevail with me!

MEDITATION. V.

Pleasures of sin and sense have often charmed and deceived me. Those things which have gratified the Eye, the Ear, the Touch, the Taste, have had a kind of an enchanting Force and Power. Sensual Delights have been some of the finest and strongest *cords of vanity*, to draw me a way from God and Duty. But now I see what madness 'tis, to please my self, and displease my Lord, whose favour affords the fullest joy, and whose frowns can cause an Hell on Earth.

Carnal Pleasures are but brutish! The Beasts enjoy those as well as men, and several of them excelling us in sense, their pleasures also may be greater; They are worse then Beasts who can be contented with such delights, because they are capable of delights much higher, which capacity the Beasts have not. How unfit is he for Christ and for the Kingdom of God, who esteems

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Earthly pleasure as the most desirable paradise : He wofully forgets both Himself and Eternity, who admires those delights and joys which can last but for a moment.

MEDITATION. VI.

O my Soul ! Art thou indeed fond of Pleasure? The highest of all are not grudged thee. *Oh taste and see that the Lord is Gracious.* What is pleasing to the Flesh cannot reach thee, but God is a Spirit, has enough, is enough for thee. The Angels have no Flesh and yet enjoy the greatest delight ; and God himself, who is the most spiritual is the most blessed and happy Being of all.

Solomon enjoyed as much as the most voluptuous can wish for. He says *whatever his Eyes desired he kept not from them, neither did he withhold from his Heart any joy.* Though sensual delight was in its highest Exaltation, yet it was wofully mixed ; the sting was much sharper then the Honey was sweet : Therefore he cries out, *all was vanity and vexation of Spirit.* Be not eager, O my Soul, after that which will prove a

vex-

vexation to thee. Return unto God, look unto Jesus, here thou maist find exceeding joy, here a Soul may find rest. And being once interested in that meat which endures to Everlasting Life, and in the unsearchable Riches of Christ, thou maist speak to thy self upon good ground, Soul take thine ease, Eat, Drink, and after an holy manner be Merry, for thou hast Goods laid up which will never be spent, but last unto Eternity.

MEDITATION. VII.

Lord ! How far is that Man from knowing Thee, *who is a Lover of Pleasure more then a Lover of God !* How excellent is thy Loving kindness ! How sweet the Meditation of Thee ! When my heart is enlarged, and my Affections for Thee are vehement and strong, here is a joy indeed which the World is a stranger to, and cannot equal. David called Thee the gladness of his Joy, no other joy can make me truly glad besides. How All-sufficient is thy fulness ! How Rich is thy Mercy ! How superabundant is thy Grace ! And even thy justice which is so affrighting unto guilty man is fully satisfied

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by the Obedience and Sufferings of Jesus Christ. Thou art *just when thou justifiest him that Believeth in Jesus.* Unbeleiving Doubts and Fears are groundless ; but joy and peace are highly reasonable.

The Saints which are now Triumphant, who see thee face to face, and are in the Lambs Presence and Throne, are far from admiring the pleasures of sin and sense.

Away, away, thou deceitful Tempter ! Offer such poor, such low things no more ; I am to preferre Affliction with the People of God before such Pleasures ; and certainly then Heaven and the foretastes of it, are of infinitely greater value. From henceforth Lord it shall be my pleasure to study thee and thy will, to love thee, to serve thee, to please thee, to praise thee, and to enjoy thee will be my highest Happiness.

MEDITATION. VIII.

What is the Applause and esteem of Men ! How vain and poor a thing is Worldly Honour ! Why should I Envy this to others, or be eager after it, or proud of it
my

my self? Man does judge according to outward appearances and therefore may more easily mistake. When man commends, Conscience may condemn, and God much more. *That which is highly esteemed among men, is an Abomination in the sight of God.*

To be spoken well of by sinners is rather a bad sign; they were false Prophets who had the good word of all men. And the good Word of Saints, is rather an argument of their Charity, then of our sincerity. The Jew that is one inwardly, his Heart is Circumcised, and his praise not of men but of God.

How poor a thing is it to be praised for Beauty, which is so great a snare to them that have it, and to others also; and which Death may so quickly turn into paleness and rottenness!

And to be praised for Worldly Greatness, does yeild but a sorry satisfaction for Death is a sure and terrible Leveller, and the Worms will make as bold with the Carcass of the Prince as of the Peasant.

What

What will it advantage one to be commended for Gifts, or Parts, or Grace, if Conscience at the same time do justly Reproach, and call one Proud and Hypocritical!

How little did Christ value Honour in the days of his Humiliation, he was despised, rejected, reproached and at last most ignominiously Crucified. Lord! They are truly Honourable, that Honour Thee, and are honoured by thee, and to whom thou wilt say at last, *Well done good and faithful Servants.*

MEDITATION. IX.

When I look into my self, my *Sins* appear by great multitudes! But a *Righteousness* of my own I cannot find, which does deserve to be called by the name of Righteousness. If the Elect Angels do cover their faces in the presence of a God glorious in Holiness, how shall sinful man appear without a Mediatour! They that are ignorant may be Proud and Self-conceited, and may trust to themselves that they are Righteous, but one view of Gods unspotted purity and

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and exact justice, is enough to cause in any mortal man self-distrust, nay self-abhorrence. The Sun is confounded, and the Moon ashamed, the Heavens are not clean in the sight of Him that made them; the Angels themselves are charged with folly, what is man that he should be Righteous!

MEDITATION. X.

My evill deeds do far exceed my good ones, how great is the number of *those*, how small comparatively the number of *these*! How many more are the vain words which I speak, then those that are serious! And when I keep the strictest watch over my Heart, the bad thoughts (though intruders) will be ten, for one that is pure and holy, if the odds be not farr greater. And can I stand then if the Lord should be extream to mark what is done amiss? Who in the World has more reason then I to cry out, *Lord enter not into judgment with thy Servant.* That little good which I do what mixtures of evil are there with it. The Flesh is still lusting against the Spirit and makes every duty I perform imperfect, and upon its own account impossible to be accepted.

The

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The best of my works cannot merit the acceptance of themselves, how then can they make satisfaction for my iniquities. I see plainly when I have done all, I must call myself unprofitable, and look unto Christ who became obedient unto Death, and desire that both I and my works the most perfect of them all may be found in him.

MEDITATION. XI.

To whom can I look but unto Jesus! Here the *Angels* look and wonder at the manifold wisdom, and amazing kindness and love of God. The *Father himself* looks here, and is delighted in the Obedience and Sufferings of his Son, through whom without any prejudice to his Justice and Holiness, his Grace and Mercy have a full vent, and a free course, to be glorified among the Sons of men.

The Beleivers under the Old Testament looked unto Jesus, though he was more darkly represented to them, *Moses and the Prophets spake of him*, and *Abraham himself rejoiced to see his day*. And under the New Testament he is more fully revealed. Here there-

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therefore I will fix my eye. and living and dying, *Behold this Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the World.*

MEDITATION. XII.

I am in my self a lost Creature. My sins, my sins have ruin'd me, the sins which I have lov'd and pleaded for, and taken so much pleasure in have done me the greatest harm. *Wo, wo is me, that I have sinned.* I have broken the best Law, and rebelled against the best Lord. I have sided with the Enemies of my Salvation to destroy my self. 'Tis an endless task to number the Stars in the Firmament, or the Sand upon the Sea shore or the days of Eternity; and I may as well do all this, as number my iniquities, *Imnumerable Evils have compassed me about, my iniquities have taken hold upon me so that I am not able to look up, they are more then the hairs of my Head, therefore my heart faileth me.* And if the wages of the least sin be Death and Hell, what large wages, and what a low place in Hell have I deserved? Gods anger is just, his power is terrible, his patience is wonderful, his mercy is utterly undeserved; I should be all despair,
were

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were it not for the Grace of God, and the Blood of God, but these are sufficient grounds of hope and Everlasting Consolation.

MEDITATION. XIII.

I plainly perceiue that all mankind have suffered shipwrack. The first man *Adam* had the steering of the Vessel, and he run it upon the Rocks, and lost himself and his whole progeny. *All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.* The calamity is general, the whole World is become guilty before God, there is none that understandeth or seeketh after God, there is none that doeth good, no not one. 'Tis truly lamentable that the humane nature should be so infected, so corrupted, as that every mind should be carnal and enmity against God, that every Heart should be like an adamant stone; that every neck should be like an iron snare. All are born the Children of wrath, and with strong inclinations to be the Children of Disobedience. So that when the Son of God came into the World to dye and save it: He found the World lying in wickedness, secure in sin, and hastning towards Everlasting misery.

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MEDITATION. XIV.

Whence is this to Man that a Saviour should be provided for him ! Were there no Creatures fell besides ? Yes an innumerable Host of Angels *kept not their first estate but left their own Habitation.*

The Angels that sinned were excellent and glorious in their first Creation, but they grew proud and Enemies to Truth; and voluntarily departed, and were justly banished from the Lord that made them. And when these Angels sinned, no mercy that we read of was extended to them. The Scripture expressly says, that *God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell.* That was a dreadful fall indeed from the highest Heaven to the lowest Hell, those mighty Spirits are fettered in *chains of darkness, and are reserved unto the judgement of the great day,* they never that we find, had a Redeemer provided, nor a pardon offered, nor after they had made themselves miserable, were they ever brought within the reach and possibility of Mercy. The Son of God *took not on him*
the

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the nature of Angels, or, he took not hold of the Angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

MEDITATION. XV.

Lord! *What was man that thou wert thus mindful of him!* Or the Son of man, that the Son of God should come and visit him! Admirable condescension! That thou whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, shouldst *rejoyce in the habitable parts of the Earth, and that thy delights should be with the Sons of men.* Can man be profitable unto God? Is it any gain to the Almighty that any make their ways perfect? Lord! Man has the benefit of Salvation, 'tis but reason that thou shouldst have intirely all the Glory. Man is therefore subservient to thine honour because his meanness makes thy condescension, and his guilt and vileness does render thy Grace the more wonderful. When a Creature so undeserving, nay that deserves so ill, is so highly advanced, as to be saved; the power and grace which does advance and save him is matter of the greater admiration.

MEDI-

MEDITATION. XVI.

Who is this Lord Jesus that undertakes the work of mans Redemption? He is the *express Image of his Fathers Person*, the *Brightness of his Glory*; He is to be Worshipped with the same Worship, and has the same Eternal Power and Godhead, with the Father and the Spirit. He it is *who created all things in Heaven and Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers*; all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

The Elect Angels adore him, the Reprobate ones he has spoyled and triumphed over, he has all power in Heaven and Earth, and Commands the Keys of Hell and Death. He is Wonderful in Counsel, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace. How safe is it then to trust in this Lord Jesus, 'tis the highest reason to believe in him, that is so mighty, that is Almighty, for he must needs be able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. *Whosoever Believeth in him shall not be confounded.*

MEDITATIO^N. XVII.

O my Soul let thy Faith be fixed and settled on the *Godhead* of thy Lord and Saviour, were he not God 'twere both sin and folly to rely upon him, Faith in him would be altogether vain; but since he is *the true God and Eternal Life*: They shall not perish but have Everlasting Life that do indeed beleive in him. Christ thy Righteousness is the *Lord Jehovah*, in him therefore thou mayst confidently expect *to be justified, and thou mayst Glory and rejoyce for ever*. The Blood of Christ is called *Gods own Blood*, because 'tis the Blood of him that is truly God and *over all God blessed forever*, as well as truly man. And surely the sufferings of him that was God, can make satisfaction for the sins that thou hast been guilty of against God.

Thou art amazed to see thy iniquities increased, and thy Trespasse grown up to the Heavens: Thou art astonished and desolate and horribly afraid to see how *high thy sin strikes*, even at God himself. But withal take notice how Christ who is God does

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does stoop and humble himself. He that thought it no Robbery to be equal with God the Father, takes upon him the form of a Servant and becomes obedient to death even the Death of the Crosse, and he is sufficient to make peace.

MEDITATIO X. XVIII.

Christ as he was God could not die, but he took mans nature upon him, that he might be in a capacity to dye for sinful and lost Man. He suffered in the same Nature that had sinned, that he might make Atonement.

Sacrifices and Burnt-offerings could never take away the guilt of sin, nor quiet the Conscience of the sinner, nor cleanse and sanctifie a defiled soul, therefore Christ had a *Body prepared for him*, that by one Offering he might perfect his Church for ever.

Wonderful mystery of Godliness / That God should be manifested in the Flesh, and suffer upon the Crosse to make peace ! Here is a wonderful contrivance, Christ is the

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Sacrifice, Christ is the Altar, and Christ is the Priest. *Through the Eternal Spirit he offered up himself without spot to God, to purge our Consciences from dead works that we might serve the Living God.*

MEDITATION. XXI.

Christ is God, and has so effectually don the work of a Mediator, that God is forward to be at Peace, and entreats sinners to be reconciled. Christ is Man, and therefore Man may go with boldness to him. O my Soul! Thy Lord is near a kin to thee, he bears good will to thy whole kind. *He is the Saviour of all men especially of them that Believe.*

Being so nearly related to thee, he has a right to Redeem thee, nay, he has actually paid the price of thy Redemption already; so that nothing remains but that thou come to him and be made free indeed. His Arms were not folded or hanging down, but stretched out upon the Cross. And oh! How forward is this Saviour who died to embrace all that come to him.

When

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When he says he will in *No wise* cast them out, methinks it speaks the greatest readiness and gladness imaginable to entertain them.

Venture, O venture to look to Jesus, to come to Jesus, and venture thy all with him: Never any miscarried in this bottom, and all must needs miscarry in any other. He knows thy Sins, thy Wants, thy Foes, thy Fears, he knows how to Pity, Protect, and Succour thee. *He was in all things made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a Merciful and Faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make Reconciliation for the sins of the People, for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he knows how to succour them that are tempted.*

MEDITATION. XX.

How excellent is the Knowledge of Christ Crucified? Look, O my Soul upon thy Lord, who loved thee at such a rate as to dye for thee! Behold him Arrested, Arraigned, and Condemned. Thou wast

guilty of the crime, and thy Lord did bear the punishment. Behold him going to execution, going unto *Golgotha*, and if he had not gone thither, whither, Oh! Whither must thou needs have gone for ever!

The Law had condemned Thee, not only the first but also the second Death, was the just desert of thy Transgressions. But here thy Surety stept in, and *Redeemed thee from the Curse of the Law being made a Curse for thee.* Look upon the Wrath of God revealed against thee because of thy ungodliness and unrighteousness, look upon the glittering Sword of Justice drawn, look upon devouring Fire and Everlasting Burnings prepared for thee, and thy self just ready to be thrown into those unquenchable Flames. And then behold and wonder at the kindness and love of Jesus, who was willing to be made sin for thee, and to bear the Wrath of God himself, that he might appease it, which was too heavy for thee to bear, and which would have sunk thee into the lowest Hell, and have kept thee there unto Eternity!

In what a deplorable and desperate case had the Sheep been, if this good Shepherd had not stood in their room and layed down his Life for them.

MEDITATION. XXI.

History tells us of *Codrus* the last *Athenian* King, who was a great Lover of his People, as appears by the manner of his Dying. When the *Grecians* of *Doris* sought Counsel from the Oracle, concerning the success of their Wars which they waged with the *Athenians*: It was answered, that undoubtedly they should prevail and become Lords of that State, when they could obtain any victory against the Nation, and yet preserve the *Athenian* King himself alive.

Codrus the King by some intelligence being informed of this answer withdrew himself from his own Forces, and putting on the habit of a common Souldier, he entred alone, the Camp of the *Dorians* his Enemies; and killing the first he met with, was

himself forthwith cut in pieces. Thus he was willing to lose his own life rather then his Country should be ruined. The Lord Jesus the Prince of Life and Glory did vail his Majesty, appeared in the form of a Servant, was contented to be counted a deceiver, and to be numbred among Transgressours, that his Life might be taken away and hereby Eternal Redemption be procured.

Codrus was deservedly honoured among the *Athenians*; and certainly the Lord Jesus should be the higher in our esteem and love, the lower he humbled and abased himself for our sakes: The offence of the Crosse should cease, since his Crucifixion was so necessary to our Eternal Salvation.

MEDITATION. XXII.

Greater Love hath no man then this that a man lay down his Life for his Friends. But Lord! Thou didst dye for Rebels and for Enemies, thou didst dye unsought to, undesired, therefore thy love is greater then the greatest love besides. Thy love
was

was stronger then Death no Water could quench it, no Floods could drown it. Hell it self could not discourage it. Twas a bitter Cup the Father put into thy hand, but thou didst drink it, and drink it off too; the very dreggs of the Cup are gone; Oh what a load did lye upon thee! All the sins of all that ever were or shall be saved did meet on thee together.

How *many stings* had thy Death, and yet thy Godhead and thy love did carry thee through all thy sufferings. Oh! That I could *comprehend with all Saints what is the beighth, and length, and depth, and breadth, and know the Love of Christ which passeth Knowledge that I may be filled with all the fulness of God!*

MEDITATION. XXIII.

My Lord did know what was to come upon him. Mans sin had been shamefull, Christs Death was most Reproachful and Accursed; Man had taken Pleasure in sin, Christs Death was painful. Man had been wilful in Transgression, and Christs Death was

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was voluntary, though 'twas violent. Man had sinned against knowledge and with great contrivance and deliberation, and Christ perfectly understood all that he was to endure. He was well aware what he was to feel from Earth, from Hell, and from his heavenly Father, and yet he makes no demur, but *endures the Cross, and despises the shame, and gives his Life a Ransom for many.*

How was he straitned till his bloody Baptism was accomplished. And when his Disciple *Peter* through an ignorant and carnal Affection would have hindred him from dying for his Church; how sharply does he rebuke him, *Get thee behind me Satan, for thou art an offence to me, thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.*

MEDITATION. XXIV.

Dearest Lord! Wert thou thus forward to dye, and art thou not forward to reap the fruit of thy Death, and to receive and save the Souls that come to thee? If a Woman in Travel be willing to be delivered; I need

I need not question, but thou art willing to see of the Travel of thy Soul, since 'tis so much for thy own satisfaction, so much for thy Fathers Glory. Certainly thou wilt not reject sinners that come to thee, since thou hast done and suffered so much for their Salvation.

If thou hadst been really unwilling to save, (as sometimes Satan misrepresents thee) that unwillingness would have shew'd it self when thou wast in thy terrible Agony, when thy Soul was amazed and full of heaviness, and exceeding sorrowful unto Death; when the Heaven was black over thee, and thy Fathers Face hid from thee, and thou didst cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* But all this thou didst willingly undergo to save lost Man, and therefore thy willingness to bestow the Salvation thou hast purchased, is not to be questioned: For surely thou art not willing that *such a Death* as thine, so sharp, so bitter, and of so great value should be *in vain*.

MEDITATION. XXV.

I do not wonder that the Apostle *Paul* does magnifie the *knowledge of Christ Crucified* above all other knowledge, compared with this, all the Philosophy of the *Greeks* was but vain, legal prerogatives, and indeed all the Ceremonies of the Law were but insignificant. Christ Crucified ! Though he be a *stumbling block to the Jews and to the Greeks foolishness*, yet he is the *Power of God and the Wisdom of God*, and the greatest demonstration of his love.

I do not wonder that the Lords Supper should be instituted on purpose, that the Crucifixion of Christ should be remembered, for the Death of Christ is the sinners life; the Foundation of his hope, and his security against Eternal Death. The Gospel is styled the *Preaching of the Cross*, and the Apostle is resolved to *Glory* in nothing else, the Truth is we can take comfort in no other knowledge, unless we have some respect and relation to Christ and him Crucified.

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The Papists foolishly adore the sign of the Cross, but true Beleivers do prize the Doctrine, the Blood, and the Vertue of Christ Crucified.

MEDITATION. XXVI.

What sights may I see in my Lord Crucified? Peace is made by the Blood of the Cross and *all things Reconciled both in Heaven and Earth.* The Saints who lived and dyed before Christ was born, were reconciled to God by the Blood of his Son which was to be shed in time; as well as Believers since his being manifested in the Flesh.

In Christ Crucified, the Anger of God is appeased, his Justice fully satisfied, and though the Christians debt amounts unto millions of Talents; yet justice acknowledgeth that Christ his surety has paid it all. Look upon God in Christ, and you will see that *Fury is not in him*, through the Lord Jesus you may see his very Bowels, he does earnestly remember sinners, his Bowels are trou-

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troubled for them, and he will surely have mercy upon them.

Oh certain and comfortable Truths! That the Lord is the God of Love and Peace, that he waits to be Gracious, that he delights in shewing mercy, and takes pleasure in them that hope in his mercy, if that hope be accompanied with a fear and careful eschewing of what is evil in his sight.

MEDITATIO XXVII.

In Christ Crucified I may see a New Covenant of Grace and Life and Peace, established, so that it is most sure and Everlasting. Jesus is the Mediatour of this Covenant, and every time I come to the Table this Covenant is sealed and confirmed to me, that I may with the greater confidence expect the accomplishment of the promises which are contained in it. These Promises are exceeding great and precious. Temporal blessings in such a measure as the Wise God sees convenient are here made over to me, for he that is a Son and Heir

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of God, is the Heir of the World, the Heir of all things.

Spiritual blessings which are of greater value, are more absolutely promised, and may with greater vehemency be desired, and with greater confidence expected. And as the Lord has engaged to give me Grace, so to give me Glory, he has said he will give me himself and be my God and Guide, my Shield, and my exceeding great Reward. And truly the Ordinances of Heaven are not so immutable and unchangeable, as the Covenant of Redemption and Reconciliation; Heaven and Earth shall passe away but one joy or tittle shall in no wise pass from the Covenant till all be fulfilled.

MEDITATION. XXVIII.

In Christ Crucified I may see the Curse of the Law removed, the sentence of condemnation reversed, the sting of Death taken out, the Principallities and Powers of darkness triumphed over. I may see Hell fast lockt and shut up for ever, and Heaven opened, a way made plain in to the

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Holiest of all, an abundant entrance administered into the Everlasting Kingdom. Who would not study the Cross of Christ? Who would not Glory and rejoyce in it? Who would not desire conformity to it, and to feel the power and vertue of it. They that are Enemies to the Cross of Christ, are Enemies to their own Souls. They that are offended at the Cross, 'tis a sign they are blind and do not understand the benefits which comes by it.

MEDITATION. XXIX.

Do this in remembrance of me, said my dying Lord and Redeemer. Lord! Can I put my memory to a better use then to remember Thee? Thy Tears, thy strong Cryes, thy being cruelly Mockt and Scourged, thy dreadful Agonies and Desertion, the peircing of thy Hands and Feet, and Side, thy Wounds and Bruises, and giving up the Ghost, and making thy Soul an Offering for sin and sinners! Shall all or any this be forgotten?

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The sufferings of such an One, such sufferings, so great, so beneficial to me, should always be kept in most affectionate remembrance. Thy Death and Burial should never be buried in oblivion. A dying Lord should always live in a Christians memory. If the poor Captives in *Babylon*, could not forget *Jerusalem*, shall I ever forget Jesus? Or my obligation to him, or the Love and service which I owe him? I desire to grieve for sin which made thee sorrowful, and to be prickt at the Heart for my iniquities, whereby thy Heart was pierced. And as I wish that sin may be more my grief, so I would prefer Jesus before my chief Joy.

MEDITATION. XXX.

My Lord at the Table says, *Take and eat this is my Body*. This is infinitely more and better then if a Rich man should say to me, *take my estate*, or then if an Emperour should bid me *take his Crown and Diadem*, or then if all the Kingdoms of the World, and all the Glory of them were offered me. When Christ offered up himself a Sacrifice unto God, that he might put sin away; how great was the Offering? If all the

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Beasts in Earth, the Fowls of the Air, had been offered this offering could not have made Atonement for ~~the~~ the sinner or for one sin. Nay if all the Angels in Heaven, had proffered themselves to be annihilated in case fallen man might be pardoned. Neither would this have been sufficient satisfaction. So that when Christ offered himself to God, he offered more, then all the World, then millions of Worlds would amount unto. And when the Lord Jesus bids me *take him*, and ~~feed~~ feed upon this *meat indeed*, this *Bread of Life*; shall I refuse? He that receives Christ how much does he recieve? He does indeed receive all: For Christ *is all in all*, and *filletb all in all*.

MEDITATION. XXXI.

Lift up your Heads O ye Gates, and be ye lift up ye Everlasting Doors, that the King of Glory may come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord Jesus is the Prince of Life, the King and Lord of Glory. Behold he stands at the door and knocks, if any man bear his voice and open the door, he will come into him and sup with him. And when he comes and is admitted, what entertainment does

does he bring! *Meat that perishes* is contemptible in comparison. Christ will give that *Meat which endures to Everlasting Life.* His Love is better then Wine, Nay, his favour is better then life it self. The Manna in the Wilderness was excellent food, but many that Eat it perished. But whoever by Faith do feed upon our Lord Jesus in reference to the second Death they become immortal; *This is the Bread which cometh down from Heaven, that a Man may Eat thereof and not dy.* I am the *Bread of Life which came down from Heaven, if any man Eat of this Bread he shall live for ever, and the Bread that I wil give is my Flesh, which I will give for the Life of the World.*

MEDITATION. XXXII.

When an inheritance is conveyed to me by a sealed Deed, the Nature of the wax is not changed, but the use of it. The Bread and Wine after the Sacramental blessing of them remain Bread and Wine still, and so in *Scripture* they are called; but their use is very much altered, and they become *Christs broad seal* to convey to me, and to assure me of the Remission of sin, of the Renewing of my Nature, and of Life and

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Immortality. Let the Papists contend for a gross and carnal presence of the Body of Christ at his Table. I am perswaded that as *Circumcision is called the Covenant, and the Lamb the Lords Passeeover.* So the bread and wine are called the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus. And yet I am also fully perswaded, that though the Body of Christ is in Heaven, yet he is most really present at the Table with them that do believe, and such are nourished and strengthened in this Ordinance. I learn from Scripture that Spiritual things are most firm, most real, most substantial, most durable ; and if so, then Christs spiritual presence is the most real presence. Christ is absent where Transubstantiation is believed, and *Romish* Devotion and Adoration of the Host is turned into abominable Idolatry.

MEDITATION. XXXIII.

Lord ! Thou art my Hope, my Help, my Saviour, my Life, my All ; Thou wouldst have me *put thee on* to cover my nakedness. Thou wouldst have me take sanctuary under thy wings in all my dangers, thou wouldst have me use thee as a Physician to cure all my spiritual maladies ; and when I
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am hungry and thirsty, and my Soul faints within me, thou hast enough to satisfie and fill me. What one said concerning the Scripture I may apply to my blessed Lord. *Adoro Christi plenitudinem.* I adore the fulness that is in Christ Jesus. Draw neerer, neerer O thou only Saviour, thou deservest the highest, the best, nay, all the room in my Heart; thou oughtest to be the most welcom guest. Let me have a clearer sight of thy transcendent loveliness, a larger taste of thy incomparable sweetness, let me clasp about thee and hold thee in more strict embraces. Why should I be empty since in thee there is a fulness of the Spirit without stint or measure? I would be poor in Spirit, but why should I be poor in Grace, since in thee there are unsearchable Riches!

MEDITATION. XXXIV.

Bread is the *Staff of Life*, Lord I come to thy Table for support and strength. Oh! Let the Bread of God strengthen me with strength in my Soul. Let me find and feel the admirable vertue of the Broken Body, that I may say from plentiful experience, *I, this is meat indeed.* Let sin grow weaker and weaker, and *Mammons* interest

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in me decline and languish, but make me *strong in Spirit*, and carry on the work of *Faith with Power*. I have need of strength who have such a way to go, and all up Hill, who have so much work to do, and such mighty Enemies to encounter and overcome. My Life lies in believing in thee, I stand no longer then Thou upholdest me. Without thee I can do nothing or what is worse then nothing, I can do nothing but sin and fall; but if thou dost *strengthen me* I shall be able to do all things. If thou withdraw from me, I shall be weak as a Child, unstable as the very Water, but if thou dost confirm me by thy Grace, I shall be like *David*, nay, like unto an Angel. I shall fight the good fight of Faith, and go on conquering, and to conquer till I get the Crown.

MEDITATION. XXXV.

How great was the breach which sin had made between God and Man, that my Lord must be broken to make it up. Could not something less have served the turn? If Christ must die or sin must not be pardoned, judge of the greatness of the fault, by the greatness of the Sacrifice and Satisfaction. What hath

hath sin done? It has filled Earth with troubles, it has filled Hell with Souls, it has turned Angels into Devils; it has provoked the God of Heaven to great and Righteous indignation, add unto all this, *It has killed Christ the Lord of Life.* He was wounded for our Transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities. Who would love who would like such an evil! If my Father had been stabbed, should I embrace the Murtherer, or like the Dagger besmeared with his blood? Oh hateful sin! i'll be revenged upon thee. I will make no provision for thee, I will lament because of thee, I will detest and abhor thee, I will be dead to thee, and endeavour to mortifie and kill thee. My Lord was not spared for thy sake, and thou shalt not be spared. Lord! *Away with these lusts,* all of them; *Crucifie them, Crucifie them,* since Christ himself did bear my sins in his own Body on the Tree, Oh let me be dead to sin and live to Righteousness!

MEDITATION. XXXVI.

Is the Cup of blessing at the Table the Communion of the Blood of Christ indeed? How should my Soul and all that is within me

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bleſs the Lords Name when I take it into my hand? My Lord does in effect ſay to me, *Here is the New Teſtament ſealed, and confirmed, there is remiſſion of all thy ſins, Here is ſanctifying Grace, here is an aſſurance of mine and my Fathers love, here is a pledge and earneſt of Glory and Immortality.* This Blood of Jeſus is deſervedly ſtyled precious, 'tis the Blood of the Lamb without ſpot, nay, 'tis the Blood of the Lord Jeſowah. To make light of this Blood as if it were an unholy or common thing, is to deny the Lord that bought us, and to bring upon our ſelves certain and ſwift deſtruction. But whoſoever by Faith applyes this Blood of Jeſus, ſhall find it ſufficient to cleanſe them from all unrighteouſneſs.

MEDITATION. XXXVII.

Deareſt Lord! How great is the vertue of that blood of thine which was ſhed upon the Croſs without the gates of *Jeruſalem*! It can appeaſe thy Fathers anger though provoked unto great fierceneſs; it can remove the greateſt guilt, it can cure and cleanſe the moſt leprouſ and defiled Soul, it can heal the moſt wounded and enraged Conſcience, Oh bleſſed Laver! where I
may

may wash and be clean, where I may bath and be eased. Effectual medicine! which heals every spiritual malady. How wonderful was thy love which made thee shed thy blood, how happy is thy Church for whom thy blood is shed. Lord I love thee, I rest upon thee, I rejoyce in thee, who hast loved thy People and washed them from their sins in thy own Blood, and hast made them Kings and Priests unto God and thy Father; who gavest thy self for thy Church, that thou mightest sanctifie and cleanse it, and present it to thy self a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

MEDITATION. XXXVIII.

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that dyed. This is my Answer unto the Accuser of the Brethren, when he tells me of my manifold Transgressions. All that he can truly lay to my charge, I am ready to lay to my own; nay I subscribe guilty to all that is down in the book of the Omniscient Gods remembrance, but then I add, Christ dyed, Christ shed his Blood, that sin might be pardoned and purged,

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purged, and I am willing to be cleansed as well as pardoned. And if the Blood of Christ be enough to satisfie divine justice, surely 'tis sufficient to satisfie and quiet the most awakened Conscience. I have indeed like a Sheep gon astray, and turned to my own way, but the Lord has laid on Christ *all my iniquities*, he endured the *chastisement of my peace*, he felt the *stripes that I might be healed*. Hereby Satan is silenced, my own desponding Spirit revived and encouraged, and in the Name and Mediation of Jesus, I can go unto God himself, though he is so glorious in Righteousness and Holiness, as a Child unto a Father.

MEDITATION. XXXIX.

The Blood of Christ does *speak*, and speaks *better things then the Blood of Abel*. No voice more loud then that of *Blood*, no blood does cry like *that of God*. This blood does speak both to God and Me; it *speaks to God*, and what ever I pray for which I really need, this blood cries that I may obtain. Blessings of all sorts were purchased by the shedding of it, and it is continually pleading that what it purchased may be bestowed. Hence is the efficacy of Prayer,

Prayer, because what the believer prays for, the blood of Christ speaks for. How loud does it cry in Gods ears, Lord pity and pardon the ~~lambled~~ and Believing Soul! Heal and Comfort the Contrite and Broken hearted! Oh give converting and Renewing Grace to all that do desire it! Those that fear thy Wrath let them escape it! Those that prize thy love, love them freely and for ever! Receive all returning sinners and take away all their iniquities! Give Grace, give Glory, and no good thing withhold from them that seek thee in sincerity. Thus the blood of Christ does intercede with God. And the Lord having contrived the shedding of it on purpose, that without any derogation from his Righteousness, he might shew mercy to the Children of men, certainly its intercession for mercy shall not be in vain.

MEDITATIONS. XL.

The blood of Christ does speak also to Me. And how good and comfortable are the words of it! Soul be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee, thou hast destroyed thy self but in me is thy help and Salvation found. God was angry with thee, but I have appeased his Wrath. He whom thou wast ready to find
a con-

a consuming Fire, is become a God in Covenant, nay a Father to thee. That blood which was shed upon the Cross has made thy Peace, though heretofore never so much a stranger, never so great an Enemy. Behold Hell lockt up, thou shalt never fall into that place of Woe, behold the way into the Holiest of all is open. Thou hast liberty to come with boldness to the Throne of Grace, and within a little while thou shalt have an abundant entrance into Glory! Dear Lord! What am I, that blood, and such blood as thine, should be shed for me! Why wast thou at such expence and cost for the Redemption, and Salvation of such a Wretch, such a Rebel! Thou hast mercy because thou wilt have mercy, thy exceeding rich and glorious Grace must be matter of a delightful transport and sweet astonishment to Eternity.

MEDITATION. XLI.

My Lords love and kindness should thaw and melt my heart! That God, whom for so long a time I neither lov'd nor fear'd, nor cared to be acquainted with, but dishonoured and sinn'd against with so high an hand, had he indeed purposes of Grace towards me from Eternity! That Jesus, whom I
shut

that and barr'd the door of my Heart so fast
against, whose word I was deaf unto, and
whose Spirit I resisted for so long a time,
has He indeed born *my* sins and carried my
sorrows! Oh that my head were Waters,
and my eyes Fountains of Tears! Oh sto-
ny Heart for shame now, become like wax
and be melted in the midst of my Bowels!
I am a prodigy of unkindness, wo is me
that I have sinned! Wo is me that I who
have sinn'd so much do grieve no more!
Surely all my days I will walk softly in the
bitterness of my Soul. I will be vile in my
own eyes and wonder that the Lord should
have respect to such an one as I, My own
sin and my Lords *Love* shall be my Study, I
will compare them together, that sin may
be lamented and loathed according to the
desert of it and that my Repentance may
be indeed Evangelical and after a godly
manner.

MEDITATION. XLII.

O my Soul, if thy sin deserves thy ha-
tred, does not thy Lord deserve thy love?
What and where hadst thou been if he had
not loved thee and given himself for thee!
Thy Lord is every way excellent, the chief-
est among ten thousand, altogether lovely,
the

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the most admired among the visible Creatures, the finest Gold, the richest Jewels; nay, the shining Sun in the Firmament, are but poor similitudes, and faint shadows to set forth his incomparable perfections. The Heavens are not clean, Angels themselves are black when compared with Jesus who is the image of the invisible God! This high this glorious and beautiful One, became flesh and sin, and a Curse for thee, so that his love is incomparable as well as his loveliness! O my soul set open all the flood-gates, let thy love even all of it run in a strong and undivided stream towards him. Love this Lord Jesus in sincerity, love him with greater ardency, love him with the greatest constancy! Here is no danger of excess, no danger of defilement or a snare in thy loving Christ, as there is in loving of the Creatures. Study him better and thou wilt see new beauties in him daily, grow in knowledge that thou mayst grow in grace and love. Let thy desires grow stronger and stronger, his fulness can easily satisfy them. Rejoyce in Him with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory, and cry out with an affectionate and holy impatency, *Come Lord Jesus come quickly. Appear the second time without sin unto Salvation.*

MEDITATION. XLIII.

How much is mine, if Christ my beloved is mine! What unsearchable riches have I an interest in! No match comparable to that with Christ either for the excellencies of the person, or the largeness of the estate. What poor offers doth the World, and the God of the World make me. They talk much of honour and wealth, and mirth and pleasure, but these afford no true contentment for that short time they are enjoy'd; and they perish in the very using. Death does quickly come with a convincing demonstration, and proves the richest man a meer beggar, the greatest Prince a contemptible clod of the Earth, the fairest and most admired beauty a skinful of dirt. Can Satan offer any thing that is Everlasting? No good thing I am sure that is so. Indeed Everlasting pains, Everlasting burnings, Everlasting wrath, he will bring all unto that are led Captive by him at his pleasure, but these Eternal evils he does most studiously conceal and hide. But this is the commendation of My Lords Benefits that they are permanent and durable. *The Treasures wax not old, the one thing*

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thing needful cannot be taken away, the inheritance is incorruptible, and the Kingdom he will give his followers cannot be moved.

MEDITATION. XLIV.

If Christ is mine, the *Father* is mine. How sweet were those words which come out of my Lords mouth quickly after he came out of the Grave. *Go tell my Brethren I ascend to my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God.* All the Attributes of God are engaged on my side. His wisdom will be my guide, his power and truth my guard and shield. His presence will be with me wherever I am, and his Grace sufficient for me in all my troubles and Temptations. All my desire will be before him, and my groaning will not be hid from him, and he can easily furnish me with the good things I desire, and deliver me from those evils which make me groan before him. I shall not want while the All-sufficient God is my Shepherd, my state is secure and safe, for my God is unchangeable, He will *never turn away from me to do me good*, and his Grace will establish me, and hinder my departing, he will uphold me with the right hand of his Righteousness, and *guide me with his Counsel, and afterwards receive me to his Glory.* Be not

thou

thou cast down or discouraged, O my Soule be not disquieted within me. Hope thou in God, and continually praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God.

MEDITATION XLV.

If Christ is mine, *the Spirit* is mine. The same soul does animate, and Act the Head and the Body ; the same Spirit is in Christ and in all his true and living Members. The Spirit of Wisdom and Illumination will enlighten me, and make me able to judge all things after a right manner. The Spirit of truth will lead me into all necessary truth, so that I shall be ignorant or mistaken in nothing which is needful to be understood and known in order unto Salvation. This Spirit will make me *hold the Head*, and from him I shall derive not only a directing light, but a vital influx, which will quicken me, and make me alive more and more abundantly. Glorious Spirit ! Thou art the *Lord and Giver of Life*, without thee the Word of Life is dead, and proves a favour of Death unto Death. Without thee Ordinances are without efficacy, without thee my Heart is cold and comfortless, I grieve that I have grieved thee. Oh let me be thy Habitation and thy Temple ! let me see thy blessed light, let me feel thy glo-

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glorious power, and know by more abundant experience what thy peace and joy means. The lusts of the flesh which defile thy Temple let them be destroyed, mortifie the deeds of the Body, fill me with Grace and make me fit for Glory. Let the least check of thine restrain me, every motion of thine let it be obeyed. Let me perpetually have *an ear to Hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*

MEDITATIO N. XLVI.

If Christ is mine, the Creatures are also mine. The Sun was created to give me light, and to make me admire the God that made it: The Stars observe their courses for my good, The Ordinances of the Heavens which alter not at mans pleasure, may serve as an instruction to me, that Gods Covenant, when Earth and Hell have done their worst, shall be kept and stand fast for ever; the Earth is Fruitful, the Sea does Ebb and Flow, the Rain descends, the Beasts and Fish and Fowl do multiply, to do me a kindness. The Ground was made for me to tread on, the Air for me to breathe in, and though such mercies as these are vouchsafed to wicked men, yet they are given to me in another way. My Lord has bought them for me with his blood, for *with him* they are given to me, they are not a trap,

a snare

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a snare to me as they are to others, but they are truly blessed to me as well as given. The higher Creatures are also mine, *Paul* and *Apollo* and *Cephas*, nay, the very Angels are said to be *ministering Spirits*, and are ready to Minister to me, and to guard me. Those loving humble Spirits have a charge given them concerning the Members of Christ, and willingly look after them that are the *Heirs of Salvation*.

MEDITATION XLVII.

If Christ be mine *Death* is also mine as well as *Life*. Death is terrible indeed to Nature, and causes the frame thereof to be dissolved; but my Lord has reconciled this last Enemy. 'Tis really mine to serve me, too much mine to do me any real harm. Christ by dying has taken out the sting of Death, so that I need not any longer be under bondage through the *Fear of Death*. O Death! Thou hast left thy sting in the side of Christ, and there hast lost it. O Grave! My Lord has broke thy gates open, and because he is risen, I may joyfully conclude my own Resurrection. My body must lye in darkness for a while, but it shall not always be Death's Prisoner. *This corruptible shall put on incorruption, this mortal shall put on immortality*, and as the Corn cast into the ground does rise with advan-

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tage, every single grain yeilding sometimes an hundred fold, so my flesh shall come up out of the Earth with an hundred fold better qualities then now it has. *'Tis sown in weakness, 'tis raised in power, 'tis sown in dishonour 'tis raised in glory.* But O my Soul! Death will not be able at all to seize on thee. Thou wilt be delivered out of a dungeon when thou leavest thine Earthly Tabernacle, and go unto a glorious Palace, as soon as ever thou art *absent from the Body* thou wilt be present with the Lord, as soon as thou art departed, thou wilt be with Christ, and how much better that is thou wilt find to thy full and Everlasting joy.

MEDITATIO N. XLVIII.

If my Beloved is mine, and all things mine is there not reason *I should be His*? His I am and His I will be to eternity. Lord! I am Thine for thou hast made me and not I my self. I am thine by the right of purchase as well as Creation, for thou hast bought me with a price. Nay, thou hast new made me on purpose for thine own use, and that I should shew forth thy praises. And I do willingly resign and yeild my self to thee; if I am thy Servant make use of me, if I am thy Treasure, keep me; if I am a Child, let me be employed in my Fathers business; if I am Betrothed to thee, let thy love and jea-

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jealousie secure me from other Lovers. Oh let me be wholly, only, always Thine! Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity! Let my tongue be like an Angels, continually sounding forth thy Name, Let my hands be holy, the path of my feet pondered; let all my members be yeilded as instruments of Righteousness, and let my soul with all its powers love and serve thee. Lord sanctifie and satisfie, and save me, and honour me, by employing me; for I lift up my soul, and give my very heart to thee.

MEDITATION. XLIX.

Ten thousand times ten thousand praises to the God of love and peace! Who would not worship thee and give thee glory, O thou King of Saints! Let thy Church on Earth, as well as Heaven, ring aloud with Hallelujah's! *Who is God save the Lord, who is a Rock save our God!* Who in Heaven above or in Earth beneath is to be compared to Thee, a God glorious in holiness, terrible in Majesty rich in mercy, abounding in Grace, wonderful in working, and keeping truth for ever! Who can by searching find out God! *who can find out the Almighty to perfection!* It is high as Heaven what can we do? Deeper then Hell what can we know? Who is a God like unto thee, abundant in loving kindness, goodness and truth! *Delighting in mercy!*

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Forgiving iniquity Transgression and sin, and reconciling the world to himself in Christ! Glory beto God in the highest for such good will towards men! Let the Heavens rejoyce, and let the Earth be glad, let the Sea roar and the fulness thereof. Let the floods clap their hands, and the hills be joyful together. Let all the creatures joyn in magnifying that God which made them! And let all Saints shout aloud for joy unto Him who has visited and redeemed them!

MEDITATION. L.

Lord! How much art thou above thy Creatures reach! Who, besides thy self, can conceive thy excellency! *Who can shew forth all thy praise!* Thou art exalted above the blessing and the thoughts of Angels, above the songs of Seraphims. Everlasting thanksgivings are thy due; Oh let me live with thee to Eternity, that I may ever be paying this debt of praises! Bless the Lord ye innumerable company of Angels, which excell in strength who see the Glory of your Maker and Lord! Praise him O ye Thrones, Dominions, Principallities and Powers. Exalt that mighty and gracious God, who elected and confirmed you, when so many other Angels sinn'd, and are eternally left, and miserable, in their Apostacy! O all ye Triumphant Saints that are with the Lamb upon the

heavenly Mount Sion. Strike up with your Harps, and if it be possible let your strains be still higher and higher! Ascribe *blessing and honour and glory, and power unto Him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever!* O thou Militant Church! Begin this heavenly work of praising here on Earth. Thy Redemption and deliverance is begun, and will most certainly be compleated. The Captain of thy Salvation will stand by thee in thy spiritual warfare, and having made thee more then victorious over all thy Enemies will bestow upon thee the promised Crown of life and glory!

MEDITATION. LL

Bless the Lord O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name! What hast thou breath for, but that it should be spent in his praises! Wherefore hast thou a tongue at command, but that it should be employed in glorifying thy Lord, and hereby become thy glory. Should not a slave that has been in very hard and cruel bondage, be thankful to him that redeemed him? Should not a Malefactor condemned to dye be thankful unto Him that pardoned him? Should not the patient that has laboured under a Death threatening distemper, be thankful to the Physician that has cured him? And how much greater reason is there O

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my Soul; that thou shouldst abound in thanksgivings unto thy God and Saviour! Thou wast in the worst sense enslaved, and he has made thee free indeed! Thou wast condemned to the second Death, to be separated forever from the Lord, and to be thrown into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, and he by dying himself has purchased a pardon for thee. Thou wast sick of spiritual, which are the worst kind of plagues, and *He is the Lord that heals thee*, Awake! Awake! Oh my soul, Awake! Awake! And utter a song of praise! Rejoyce in Christ Jesus! Glory in the Father of mercies! *Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy Diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneeth thee with loving kindness, and tender mercies!*

MEDITATION. LII.

Shall I not magnifie and advance my Lord who am so highly advanced my self? I was once in darkness and securely went on towards the blackness of darkness forever, *but I am called out of darkness into marvellous light*. I was once a stranger and a forreiner, but now I am a fellow Citizen with the Saints, and of the household of God. I am become a Child of God, who was once a Child of Wrath and Disobedience. I am become an Heir of God and a Joint-Heir with Christ, un-

to that inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away. Nay, my Lord who has loved me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood, hath made me a King and a Priest unto God and his Father, and I must reign for ever, for of this Kingdom which I have now a Title to, and a sure promise of, there shall be no end! Oh rich! Oh free! Oh glorious Grace! I am at a loss for an expression high enough to set forth the thousandth part of my Lords incomparable kindness; my shallow Conceptions cannot reach what is incomprehensible: Therefore I must be silent in a joyful admiration!

MEDITATION. LIII.

What shall I render unto the Lord? My All is due, my All is too little, and by rendering my All, I secure my All, and so am still more benefited, and I become more my Lords debter! I find my self most happily puzzled with my Lords goodness. He gives himself to me, and requires that I should give my self to him, but in so doing not He but I receive the benefit. All the retributions thou requirest, O my God and Father, are but to do my self more kindnesses. Duties are my priviledges! All thy precepts are for my profit and my peace and pleasure to obey them. Thou art beyond all
compare

compare the very best Master! Oh let my ear be hallowed, for I will serve thee for ever; let my Heart be circumcised that I may love thee Eternally! There is a sweetness in the acting of every Grace. There is great peace in keeping of thy law, there is an amiableness in thy Tabernacles, thy power and thy glory are seen in thy sanctuary! and though that word Suffering may sound harsh, yet upon experience, suffering will be found the most delightful proof of Christian obedience.

MEDITATION. LIV.

My Lord did not stick at suffering and why should I? Why should the Cross daunt me? If I will be indeed Godly, Persecution is to be expected. The old Serpent is full of hatred, and so are his seed, and their hatred is implacable. But when I consider my Lords love, and power, and presence. Hells Malice and the Worlds Rage become contemptible; times of suffering are times of the sweetest solace. Those are not unreasonable injunctions, Count it all joy when ye fall into divers Temptations, and Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake, rejoyce and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in Heaven. The Spirit of glory and of God does rest upon his suffering Saints, so that they glory in tribulation, they rejoyce

rejoyce in it as a dignity when they suffer shame for the name of Jesus, they are gainers by their losses, they gain an *hundred fold* in this World, besides the Kingdom in the other World.

MEDITATION. LV.

O my soul follow thy Lord, though he lead thee in rough ways and paths of great affliction. If *sufferings abound, consolation shall abound*, and grace shall be sufficient. The Cross of Christ though the outside of it be affrighting, yet it is lined with love, and easily born. And if it should come to pass that Life must be taken away; What better use can Life be put to then to lay it down for the Testimony of Jesus? The painfullest deaths have proved many times most pleasant. What raptures of joy have the Martyrs had, at the stake and in the flames! *Prudentius* of old observed, *Mors Christianis ludus est*; That Death was but a sport unto the Christians! Remarkable is that passage of *Bainham* the Martyr, when his arms and legs were half consumed by the fire, he spake these words, *O ye Papists you look for miracles, and here now you may see a miracle, for in this fire I feel no more pain, then if I were in a bed of Down, it is to me a bed of Roses!* Resolve therefore O my soul, undauntedly to undergo whatever tribula-

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on thou meetest for the sake of Righteousness. Rely upon thy faithful God who will not suffer thee to be tempted above what his Grace shall enable thee to bear, with joy as well as patience!

MEDITATION. LVI.

Thy death O Lord, is to be shewn forth till thou *comest*, 'tis proper for me to think of thy coming, and to rejoyce at the thoughts of it. My Lord and Redeemer, will certainly appear the second time without sin to salvation. And when he shall appear I shall be like him, and appear with him in glory. Time and days do fly away apace, and the coming of my Lord draweth nigh. That will be the day of my open absolution, of my full and compleat Redemption, of my joyful and triumphant Coronation. How full of glory and of love, will be the face of Jesus then! Ah! where shall the ungodly and sinners then appear! How will the greatest and the stoutest of them, even the Kings and Chief Captains, and mighty men, tremble; and call to the Rocks and Mountains to fall on them and cover them, from the face of him that sits upon the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb! But though most of mankind be full of horror, I if I am a true Believer shall be full of joy, and after I have been openly acquitted, own'd and crown'd,

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before Men and Angels : Whither, Oh whither will my Lord carry me ! Into those Mansions he is gone to prepare ; into the presence Chamber of the King of Glory. Where God himself will be *All in All*.

MEDITATION. LVII.

I find some sweetness in the way and means of grace, what shall I find in the end ! if in vale of Tears such joy be found, what will be enjoyed in a paradise of delight ! if in the midst of labours and fightings, and temptations I find so much satisfaction, what contentment will an *Everlasting* rest afford me ! *Augustine* speaks excellently, *Soliloq. cap. 35. Intra in gaudium sine tristitia ; ubi erit omne bonum, et non erit aliquod malum ; ubi erit quicquid voles, et non erit quicquid noles : O gaudium vincens omne gaudium ! letitia sine dolore, lux sine tenebris, vita sine morte, ubi iuventus nunquam senescit, ubi decor nunquam pallescit, ubi amor nunquam tepescit, gaudium nunquam decrescit, ubi dolor nunquam sentitur, gemitus nunquam auditur, ubi triste nihil videtur, ubi malum nullum timeatur, quia summum bonum possidetur.* Enter O my soul into joy without sadness ! Where there shall be a presence of all good an absence of all evil, where there shall be every thing which thou desirest, nothing at all that thou dis-

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dislikest. O joy surpassing all other joys! Gladness without Grief, Light without Darkness, Life without Death! There Youth shall never grow old, Beauty shall never fade, Love shall never wax cold, and Joy shall never be diminished; there sorrow shall never be felt, one sigh shall never be heard; nothing sad shall be seen, nothing evil shall be feared, because the cheifest good shall be possessed.

MEDITATION. LVIII.

Lord! *I am thine save me, save me or I shall surely perish, bring me safe to the Haven, preserve me to thy heavenly Kingdom, that neither Faith nor Conscience, nor my soul may suffer shipwrack. Thou hast made an Everlasting Covenant with me, and at thy Table this Covenant has been sealed, Oh never turn away from me to do me good, and let thy power and love, and the fear of thy name secure me from Apostacy! I am not sufficient to be my own keeper, but who shall be able to pluck me out of the hand of Christ and of the Father who is greater then all? Thou art of power to establish me, and canst easily keep me from falling, and present me faultless before the presence of thy glory with exceeding great joy. Oh let not my faith fail, nor my love cool, nor my watchfulness abate; let Sa-*
tans

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tans wiles and devices be unsuccessful, help me to slight the worlds frowns, and to be deaf and dead, to the flatteries and smiles of it. Let me obtain mercy to be faithful in thy Covenant, let my spirit be cured of its natural fickleness and treachery, let resolutions to be the Lords, and to serve the Lord be peremptory, being made and kept with a strength beyond my own! And let me at last be able to say. *O God my Heart is fixed, my Heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise.*

Herbert. pag. 140.

King of Glory, King of Peace,
I will love thee:
And that love may never cease,
I will move thee.

Thou hast granted my request,
Thou hast heard me:
Thou didst note my working breast,
Thou hast spar'd me.

Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
And the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee.

Though

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Though my sins against me cry'd,
Thou didst clear me;
And alone, when they reply'd,
Thou didst hear me.

Seven whole days, not one in seven,
I will praise thee :
In my Heart though not in Heaven,
I can raise thee.

Thou grew'st soft and moist with Tears,
Thou relentedst :
And when Justice call'd for fears,
Thou dissentedst.

Small it is in this poor sort
To enroll thee :
Even Eternity is too short
To extoll thee.

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